

Inclusive Education in Ghana

An Analysis of Policies and the Practices in One Mainstream School and One Inclusive School in the Greater Accra Region

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Abstract

In a time where basic education, non-discrimination, social justice and equality of opportunities are linked to (global) human rights, inclusive education may serve as a valuable entry point to achieve these rights. With the inclusive approach to education, all children are given access to quality education within mainstream classrooms at all times. This implies that mainstream education must accommodate and assure learning and participation among all pupils.

For inclusive education to be achievable and successful, clear education policies and guidelines, well-trained teacher, allocation of appropriate resources, and appropriate use of these resources in addition to teaching and learning activities are among the factors that need to be taken into account. These factors operate separately and concurrently at three levels; government level, colleges and university level, and school and classroom level. The ultimate goal of inclusive education is to reach the children themselves. Involvement of and convergence between all levels is therefore essential.

This thesis explores how these levels are operating in the Ghanaian context. The purpose is to investigate policies and practices, exemplified with a comparison of the practices at two selected schools in the Greater Accra Region. These two schools adopt different educational approaches; the mainstream (regular) approach and the inclusive approach. The purpose of a comparison between these two approaches is to assess implementation of inclusive education and how it differs from mainstream education. Exploring inclusive education from different angles and levels, further gives the possibility to bring the field to a close; how and to what extent has inclusive education been adopted in the Ghanaian context, where are the gaps, and what are the challenges? These constitute essential questions to be answered.

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Table of content

Inclusive Education in Ghana: An Analysis of Policies and the Practices in One Mainstream School and One Inclusive School in the Greater Accra Region	III
Abstract	V
Acknowledgement.....	VI
Table of content.....	VII
List of models.....	X
List of tables	XI
List of acronyms.....	XIII
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Background information	1
1.2 Purpose and focus of the research	2
1.3 Research methodology	3
1.4 Limitations and delimitations of the research	4
1.5 Significance of the research	5
1.6 Structure of the thesis.....	5
2 Literature review	6
2.1 International initiatives and development of inclusive education	6
2.2 Educational access and quality.....	8
2.2.1 Accessibility, availability, acceptability and adaptability	9
2.3 Constructivist and socio-constructivist theories on teaching and learning	10
2.4 Inclusive education pedagogy	13
2.4.1 The theories' impact on inclusive education pedagogy	13
2.4.2 Instructional differentiation.....	14
2.5 Factors that can impact implementation of inclusive education	15
2.5.1 Policy factors.....	16
2.5.2 School factors	16
2.5.3 Cultural factors	17
2.6 Significant prior research from Ghana	19

3	Conceptual framework	21
3.1	Inclusive education.....	21
3.1.1	Development of inclusive education	21
3.2	National adoption and implementation of inclusive education	23
3.2.1	Three levels of inclusive education	23
3.2.2	Assessment for development.....	24
3.2.3	Accessibility, availability, acceptability and adaptability	25
3.2.4	Educational input, process, output and outcomes	25
3.2.5	Factors impacting the three levels	26
4	Contextualization	28
4.1	Ghana	28
4.2	Brief education history	29
4.3	The current education system of Ghana	29
4.3.1	Special education.....	30
4.3.2	Inclusive education.....	30
4.4	Objectives of education	31
4.5	Teacher training.....	32
4.6	Marginalization in education.....	33
4.6.1	Marginalization and learning difficulties	34
5	Methodology	35
5.1	The qualitative approach	35
5.2	Comparative research design	36
5.3	Units of analysis	36
5.3.1	The mainstream school.....	37
5.3.2	The inclusive school.....	38
5.4	Sampling.....	38
5.5	Using mixed methods.....	39
5.5.1	Observations.....	40
5.5.2	Semi-structured interviews.....	40
5.5.3	Qualitative content analysis	42
5.6	Trustworthiness of the research.....	43
5.6.1	Credibility.....	43
5.6.2	Transferability	43

5.6.3 Dependability	44
5.6.4 Confirmability	44
5.7 The role of the researcher	45
5.8 Ethical considerations	45
6 Data presentation	46
6.1 National policies and guidelines	46
6.1.1 Educational access and quality	46
6.1.2 Special, mainstream and inclusive education in Ghana	47
6.1.3 The basic school curriculum	54
6.2 Teacher training and preparation.....	58
6.2.1 Inclusive education in Teacher Training Colleges	58
6.3 School and classroom implementation.....	60
6.3.1 The mainstream school.....	61
6.3.2 The inclusive school.....	68
6.3.3 The two schools compared	74
7 Data discussion and conclusion.....	77
7.1 Summary of the findings	77
7.2 The development of inclusive education in Ghana	79
7.3 Access.....	81
7.3.1 Assessment and placement.....	82
7.4 Quality	83
7.4.1 Classroom practices.....	83
7.4.2 Policy and school factors impacting quality inclusive education	85
7.4.3 Cultural factors impacting quality inclusive education	87
7.5 Conclusion.....	88
7.5.1 Future challenges.....	89
Literature list	91

List of models

Model 3.1: The international development towards IE.....	22
Model 3.2: Levels of IE.....	23
Model 3.3: The levels of IE and their interaction with each other.....	24
Model 6.1: The development of IE in Ghana.....	51
Model 7.1: International and Ghanaian development of IE.....	80

List of tables

Table 5.1: Summary of the research methods used.....	41-42
Table 6.1: Outcomes of the observation guide in the mainstream school.....	63
Table 6.2: Outcomes of the observation guide in the inclusive school.....	70-71

List of acronyms

BED: Basic Education Division

ECCE: Early Childhood Care and Education

EFA: Education for All

FUCBE: Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education

GES: Ghana Education Service

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

IE: Inclusive Education

IoE: Institute of Education

JHS: Junior High School

MoE: Ministry of Education

MoES: Ministry of Education and Science

MoESS: Ministry of Education Science and Sports

SED: Special Education Division

SNE: Special Needs Education

TTC: Teacher Training College

UEW: University of Education, Winneba

UCC: University of Cape Coast

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

1 Introduction

Before starting the Master of Philosophy program in Comparative and International Education, I graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Special Needs Education from the University of Oslo, Norway. One of the topics that interested me the most was inclusive education (IE) and its implications on the learning environment of children with learning difficulties. I have over the past few years gained some experience working with children with different levels of learning difficulties – ranging from general learning difficulties to severe autism. This has given me a deep interest in the educational rights and opportunities of these children. The case of Ghana caught my attention when I came across an article about teachers' attitudes towards and knowledge about IE and how this affects the education of children with learning difficulties in mainstream schools (see Kuyini & Desai 2007). This article led me to the search for further readings on IE in Ghana, and I became interested in how it was reportedly practiced in Ghanaian schools.

1.1 Background information

The main principles of IE is that all children, regardless of abilities, needs or interests, shall access, learn and participate together in mainstream (regular) educational (UNESCO & MoES Spain 1994). Due to its focus on all children, including those with disabilities and other disadvantages, IE refers to an approach that aims at mainstream schools' possibilities to accommodate and respect the differences and difficulties among their pupils. This does not only imply access to and quality of mainstream education, it also implies social justice and respect and acceptance of diversity and difference (Peters 2004, Thomas & Loxley 2007, UNESCO & MoES Spain 1994).

In a time where, globally, basic education is seen as a human right – where governments are obliged to provide accessible and quality basic education to all children (Tomasevski 2003) – adopting and implementing the principles of IE may therefore serve as a valuable approach. With its principles, IE may not only serve as a valuable starting point for ensuring all children's access to and participation in mainstream (regular) education, it may also serve as an important starting point for children's access to and participation in mainstream society. Accordingly, it not only calls for a broader understanding of mainstream (regular) education, it also calls for a broader understanding of mainstream society. Inclusive education may therefore not only achieve equal opportunity to education, it may also combat discrimination, create welcoming communities and

build inclusive and non-discriminative societies. To achieve IE, however, societies and communities must be fully committed and engaged in achieving its principles; without an inclusive society, inclusion in education is hardly achievable (Dei 2004, Mittler 2000, Peters 2004, Thomas & Loxley 2007, UNESCO & MoES Spain 1994).

However, there are many identified barriers linked to implementation of IE, such as large class sizes, limited teaching time, inflexible school curriculum and limited resources (Mittler 2000, Pijl, Mijer & Hegarty 1997, Pijl & Mijer 1997:8-13, UNESCO 2009). These barriers are linked to country specific economic, political and socio-cultural factors and priorities. These factor and priorities are further linked to notions of educational input, process, output and outcomes (Peters 2004).

In Ghana, IE was introduced in the 1990s, and led by the Education for All (EFA) and Salamanca agendas (Anthony 2011). In 2003/2004, it was, for the first time, introduced in Ghanaian schools under a pilot project, and in 2008 there were 129 schools adapting IE. These schools are called inclusive schools and the purpose is to give disabled and disadvantaged children the opportunity to receive education in mainstream schools (Anthony 2009). However, teachers' knowledge of IE, limited resources, and limited instructional attention given to children with different learning abilities in mainstream classrooms are hindering successful implementation.

1.2 Purpose and focus of the research

The title of this thesis is *Inclusive Education in Ghana; An Analysis of Policies and the Practices in One Mainstream School and One Inclusive School in the Greater Accra Region*. With this, the purpose is to explore how access and quality of IE is accounted for in two selected schools, and how and to what extent national policies and teacher training institutions facilitate school practices of IE. This thesis therefore explores IE in Ghana from different levels and angles. The exploration further takes place in the light of international developments in the field.

The two selected schools constitute two different examples of basic school approaches in Ghana. A comparison of their practices can shed light on how these two different approaches work with the Ghanaian adoption of IE. Due to their different approaches, it is expected that their implementation of IE differ from one another; the inclusive school is expected to work towards IE principles to a greater extent than the mainstream school.

The focus of this research is on both access and quality, but particular emphasis is given to the latter. Focusing on access only is not sufficient. Pupils may be physically present but excluded from learning. To be able to assess IE according to its main principles, it is therefore equally important to assess the quality aspect; pupils' participation and learning in school. With regards to the mentioned purpose and focus, the following research questions are asked;

1: To what extent and in what ways has the principles of inclusive education been adopted in the Ghanaian context?

2: How has inclusive education been implemented in the two different schools and how do the different approaches compare?

3: How can quality inclusive education contribute to improved learning in the Ghanaian environment and what are the challenges?

The first research question serves as a starting point for the exploration of how IE is accounted for in the Ghanaian context; to what extent and in what ways have the (international set) IE principles of access and quality been adopted in Ghana? Aspects on whether IE is defined in terms of access or quality or both, which children are accounted for, and which school practices are expected to occur are of concern. In this regard, I will explore IE from different angles; policy documents, basic school syllabuses, teacher training and basic schools. The second research question concerns the actual implementation of IE. The purpose is to explore how and to what extent the two principles of IE are implemented at the two different schools. With this research question, the quality aspect of IE is given specific attention. With the third research question, factors that impact IE's contribution to children's learning in the Ghanaian context are analyzed. Here, possible challenges to successful IE are to be identified.

1.3 Research methodology

What research methodology researchers choose to use depends on the focus and purpose of their research. It also depends on the view they take on social phenomena, such as education and pedagogy – teaching strategies. According to Bryman (2004) one can either view social phenomena from a subjective or objective standpoint. The subjective standpoint adopts a view on social phenomena as constructed and interpreted by individuals. Linked to this standpoint is the gathering of data through qualitative methods. This refers to data collection that ensures insight into the meanings, unique features and interpretations of the social phenomena under

investigation. The objective standpoint, on the other hand, adopts a view on social phenomena as externally determined and without individual influence. This standpoint is linked to the gathering of data through quantitative methods. This implies researching social phenomena based on statistical facts and numbers (Bryman 2004).

My standpoint to social phenomena is subjective. To be able to understand IE in Ghana from different angles or levels, I have therefore used methods linked to the qualitative approach. The methods used were; observations, semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, and document analysis. These methodological issues are discussed in more detail in chapter five.

1.4 Limitations and delimitations of the research

The purpose of this research is not to compare or judge the case of IE in Ghana to the cases of IE elsewhere. Neither is it to generalize the findings from the two selected schools to other schools. Inclusive education is implemented differently in different countries. The findings from this research may not be applicable to other countries or to other schools. However, the selected schools are typical government schools and the findings of this research are likely to be applicable to similar schools in the country. This does not discount other school conditions and local factors that may exist and which may impact the practical work towards the principles of IE. However, based on existing theories and other research from the field of IE, one can make assumptions about the practice of IE in Ghanaian schools from the outcomes of this research.

Another limitation is related to the insider-outsider perspective. In this regard, it can be noted as a limitation that I am not Ghanaian myself; I had never entered a Ghanaian school before the time of conducting field work. Also, I am conducting non-participant observations. This perspective may, on the other hand, strengthen the research; due to my lack of prior experience, things that are easily taken for granted by Ghanaians may be detected and given important attention by an outsider.

Further, when assessing how IE is accounted for at teacher training institutions I base my findings on analysis of the curriculum made for the teacher training colleges (TTCs) only. I have not participated in any of the classes given at a TTC, and I am therefore not able to assess to what extent and how the different issues from the curriculum are taught. However, accompanied by interviews with a tutor at Accra TTC, the curriculum gave me insights into the focus given to IE.

1.5 Significance of the research

This research is important;

1: to highlight the practical classroom implementation of IE, and

2: to contribute to the body of knowledge in the general (international and Ghanaian) field of IE

Research on this topic can further be used as guideline for future policy and practice adjustments.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

Following this introduction, chapter two presents relevant and significant theories and previous research linked to the topic of inclusive education. Chapter three presents the conceptual framework of this thesis; central concepts and theories that provide the foundation necessary for understanding of the thesis. Thereafter, the context of Ghana is described in chapter four.

Chapter five concerns the methods chosen and used for the gathering of relevant data. And, lastly, chapters six and seven concern the presentation, discussion and conclusions of the data gathered in relation to the core issues, concepts and theories presented in chapter two and three.

2 Literature review

In this chapter issues regarding inclusive education (IE) will be presented and discussed. Firstly, international initiatives and development of IE are discussed, followed by a discussion of the core essence and principles of IE. With regards to the essence and principles of IE, some selected theories on teaching and learning may serve as underlying philosophies to these principles; as underlying philosophies for the pedagogical implementation needed to reach the goals of IE. These are the constructivist and socio-constructivist theories. Thereafter, some policy, school and cultural factors that may affect practical implementations of IE are highlighted. Finally, some selected researches previously conducted on the topic from the field of Ghana are presented.

2.1 International initiatives and development of inclusive education

Children's rights to education was first stated in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights from 1948 - more specifically, in the declarations article number 26. In this article it is stated that everyone shall have the right to education, that education at elementary levels shall be free and compulsory, and that education shall be directed towards the full development of the human personality (United Nations 2012-02-13).

Other international guidelines that focus on the right to education are those set forth at the World Conference on Education for All (hereafter EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand and the following World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal. In 1990, World Conference on EFA was launched, with the overall goal of ensuring every citizen's in every society's right to education by 2015. In accordance to that, six goals were adopted. These goals focus on, among others, the expansion and improvement of comprehensive basic education, with a specific focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged children (goals one). Further, it focuses on all children's - no matter their ethnic background, gender or life circumstances - access to and completion of good quality, free and compulsory primary education (goal two). It also states that all children shall have the right to access learning programs or education that fit their personal needs (goal three). Finally, it mentions the need for an improvement of quality in education and children's recognized and measurable learning outcomes, with a specific focus on literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (goal six) (World Bank 2012-02-15, UNESCO 2012-02-15). Ten years later, the World Education Forum was held in Dakar, Senegal to reaffirm these goals. In addition, the Dakar

Framework for Action emphasized the right to benefit from an education based on the person's basic learning needs, including the possibility to change their future opportunities. Further, it focused on the aspects of learning to know, to do, to live together and to be (UNESCO 2000).

The first time IE was put on the international agenda, however, was in 1994 under the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, held in Salamanca, Spain. This conference adopted The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, where the aim is to contribute to the overall goals of the previously mentioned declarations and conventions on the human rights to education by focusing on inclusion. This means that (mainstream) schools should be able to accommodate all children, no matter their educational, social and/or physical abilities, interests and needs. Here, inclusive education is aiming at representing an educational set-up that will make teaching and learning more effective, learner-centered and inclusive of those with special educational needs. Further, in the Salamanca statement the goals of EFA are said to be better achieved through inclusive education (UNESCO & MoES Spain 1994).

With the introduction of the IE agenda, one can see a shift from the notion of the right to an educational institution or learning program that fit one's personal needs or abilities – either through segregation or integration - to the notion of every child being physically, mentally and socially included into the same mainstream educational institution. This implies a structural change within the mainstream schools; a structural change that ensures all children's physical, mental and social participation in the mainstream classroom at all times.

Internationally, the development towards IE has been driven by human right forces on equal opportunities and social justice (Ferguson 2008, Sebba & Ainscow 1996). The development is evidenced through three phases; educational segregation, educational integration and educational inclusion. Educational segregation refers to educational provision through special schools. These are schools that accommodate children who are expected not to be able to learn or participate in the mainstream education system. They mainly focus on children who are disabled or have learning difficulties and their placement in schools that match their disability or difficulty (Ferguson 2008, Pijl, Meijer & Hegarty 1997, Sebba & Ainscow 1996, Tomlinson 1985, Wade & Moore 1992). Based on these schools' segregated character going against human rights and the equality of opportunity, educational integration was put on the agenda during the 1980's. Educational integration often refers to an educational approach that aims at providing education for children with disabilities and other disadvantages within the mainstream education system. This educational provision either takes place in special units or in mainstream (regular)

classrooms (Sebba & Ainscow 1996, Vislie 2003, Wade & Moore 1992). Despite attempts towards the latter, some children were often expected to receive special education in the special units. This was often the case until the child was considered able to benefit from the instruction given in the mainstream classroom (Vislie 2003). Many argued that integration thus never fully achieved its goals to work towards human rights on equality of opportunities and social justice. To make sure that all children would receive the same educational opportunities of appropriate schooling, the notion of IE was introduced during the 1990's (Ferguson 2008, Miles & Singal 2008).

2.2 Educational access and quality

For inclusion rather than integration in education to take place, the aspect of quality is essential. In this regard, children's participation and learning is at the center of attention. All the mentioned conventions and declarations emphasize that education should aim at the development of every individuals' fullest and personal potential. To secure the quality of education this implies that educational institutions must be able to accommodate all children – they must fit the needs of all pupils UNESCO & MoES Spain 1994). This implies that children with no (visible) disadvantages should also be taken into account. Through the notion of IE, this means that every mainstream educational institution must be able to accommodate all pupils, including those with disabilities and other disadvantages. With such a focus, IE not only ensures children's rights *to* education, it also ensures their rights *in* education; it not only ensures their right to access an educational institution, it also ensures their rights to participate and learn – their rights to receive classroom instruction that benefit their needs.

The notion of inclusion is itself as much about social justice and the respect and accepts of diversity and difference as it is about mainstream (regular) educational and learning difficulties. Inclusion in education should therefore focus on all children, and not only children with specific learning difficulties (Thomas and Loxley 2007). This implies that all factors of educational marginalization need to be accounted for; be it gender, ethnicity or socio-economic background. Further, it entails inclusion in education to call for “broader understanding of learning, teaching and administration of education and its relation to social development” (Dei 2004:19). Such educational inclusion may thus serve as a platform for children's inclusion in society as a whole; one's inclusion in the mainstream education may lead to one's inclusion in the mainstream society. For education institutions to be able to adapt inclusive approaches, their cultures, policies and practices need to be changed. Such changes, however, does not only involve the

school itself; it involves all teachers, parents, local communities and governments. In other words, IE cannot be met unless teachers and other school staff, pupils, parents, the community and the government support and commit themselves to it (Mittler 2000, UNESCO & MoES Spain 1994). In this regard, IE is referred to as a never-ending (societal) process rather than a single event (Ainscow 2005).

2.2.1 Accessibility, availability, acceptability and adaptability

In relation to national governments' obligations to meet international goals on education, Tomasevski has put together a 4-A's scheme. According to this 4-A's scheme, governments are obliged to make education accessible, available, acceptable and adaptable (Tomasevski 2003).

Educational accessibility and availability support that every child should access an educational institution that is free, compulsory and available. This implies non-discrimination and all barriers to be removed (ibid). However, it does not imply that every educational institution should be able to accommodate all children, no matter their abilities, needs and interests. This may lead to educational segregation or educational integration for some children based on their individual characteristics and/or life circumstances. In this regard, for the principles of IE to be met, school's infrastructure need to take all children's abilities into account. Acceptability and adaptability, on the other hand, are linked to the aspect of quality in education. With acceptability quality has to do with school environment; social, physical and mental. This includes a minimum standard of health and safety issues, well trained teachers and no use of corporal punishment (ibid). IE may be seen as a prerequisite in terms of achieving these goals; every child's personal potential and needs should be taken into account and acted upon. IE further makes a strong link to the obligation of adaptability. This obligation implies that educational institutions should adapt to every child - the child should not adapt to educational institutions. For this to be achievable, schools should focus their teaching based on the interests of the individual child (ibid).

For education to be acceptable and adaptable – to achieve the obligations linked to quality of education – some theories on teaching and learning can serve as necessary underlying philosophies.

2.3 Constructivist and socio-constructivist theories on teaching and learning

For successful school and classroom implementation of the principle of quality IE, the theories of constructivism and socio-constructivism can be seen as necessary underlying philosophies. These are theories on children's learning and make necessary fundamentals for pedagogical practice that support quality IE.

Constructivism basically refers to the belief that children or adults construct their knowledge based on personal experiences. Socio-constructivism adds to this the impact social and cultural factors have on that knowledge construction. They are middle range theories (Bryman 2008) on teaching and learning that to varying degrees can be linked to the practical implementation of quality IE.

Piaget's assimilation and accommodation

Through constructivism, Piaget has contributed to the field of education with his idea of how knowledge is constructed or arrived at among people. For Piaget, the knowledge people arrives at is constructed through the notions of assimilation and accommodation of daily life experiences (von Glaserfeld 1989).

Assimilation and accommodation, in the context of Piagetian theory on learning, refers to people's abilities to transfer experiences from one situation to another similar situation. This transfer of experiences is assisted by a set of mental schemes of categories people have constructed. According to Piaget, assimilation occurs when children are trying to fit new experiences or information into already existing categories in their mental schemes. This can be the case, for example, if a child tries to fit an apple into the mental scheme of bouncing balls. Accommodation, on the other hand, occurs when children expand their already existing mental schemes by adding new categories based on new experiences. Using the same example, the child will in the case of accommodation add a new category to the mental scheme because he or she realizes that the apple somehow does not fit with the category of bouncing balls. Piaget argues that cognitive development only occur when accommodation takes place (von Glaserfeld 1989, Kozulin 2003:15-38).

According to Piaget and the constructivist theory, learning and cognitive development is not passive; it takes place in children's active interaction with the environment and other individuals.

In educational situations, teachers then become facilitators rather than knowledge transmitters. Teachers must provide pupils with tasks that ensure expansion of their mental schemes (von Glaserfeld 1989).

Vygotsky's psychological tools, internalization, mediation and zone of proximal development

Vygotsky's sociocultural and socio-constructivist theories support Piaget's above mentioned theory on knowledge construction. However, Vygotsky believes that children construct their knowledge through social interaction within culturally determined realities. His theories on learning are thus based on the notion that cognition and development are socially and culturally rather than individually situated and determined. Through this notion, educationists are introduced to a way of viewing the individual child; a view that brings the child and his or her perception closer to the social and cultural reality in which they take place (Kozulin 1998, Wertsch 1985).

Vygotsky's theories have four main components that are frequently used in issues concerning education; these are the components of psychological tools, internalization, mediation and the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Kozulin 2003:15-38, Wertsch 1985). With psychological tools, Vygotsky refers to the human constructed symbols that are used to better master one's own thoughts, perceptions, memories etc. These symbols consist of, among others, signs, texts and formulas that serve as prerequisites of individual cognition. The development of psychological tools can thus be seen as paramount for learning, and additionally, learning can be seen as paramount for the further development of such tools. Such development leads to the development of higher mental functions or skills. In this regard, Vygotsky emphasizes the importance of the social and cultural contexts in which the psychological tools are constructed and used. He emphasizes that individual cognitive development, assisted by the use of psychological tools, is dependent on the social and cultural context in which they take place. In other words, learning and development is not separated from context, but guided by context (Kozulin 1998, Wertsch 1985).

Vygotsky argues that the learning of these tools, and thus the development of higher mental skills, takes place through the process of internalization. This is the process in which the knowledge or skill moves from the external to the internal; it is the process in which the child develops its own personal experience of the knowledge or skill and makes its own meaning of it (Lantolf 2003:349-370).

Closely linked to the development of psychological tools is also the notion of mediation. Vygotsky himself referred to mediation primarily in terms of symbolic tools-mediators appropriated by the child within a context specific activity. However, his idea of mediation has been further elaborated and developed by others to include the notion of human mediation. In order to fully develop a useful set of psychological tools, the child has to be assisted by a human mediator. This human mediator, for example a teacher, is to help and guide children within their learning activities. Without such a mediator, a child's independent exploration may often lead to insufficient and immature concepts and skills, and hinder the development of higher mental skills. With this, the role of the teacher as a mediator is highly important in a child's acquisition of knowledge and skills (Kozulin 1998, Kozulin 2003:15-38, Wertsch 1985).

The forth component of Vygotskian theory is the notion of ZPD. ZPD refers to children's individual learning potential - it refers to the stage in children's development that is situated between what they manage to do independently and what they do not manage independently. Hence, it is closely linked to the notion of mediation, and emphasizes the use of a human mediator in the guidance of children's path towards further independent exploration (Kozulin 2003:15-38, Wertsch 1985).

Bruner's scaffolding

Another supporter of constructivism is Jerome Bruner. As Vygotsky, Bruner also emphasizes the importance of cultural influence in a child's learning; the constructed knowledge and reality is culturally situated (Bruner 1996). One of his many contributions to the field of education is his notion of scaffolding. Scaffolding refers to the use of external cognitive support in children's performance or understanding of specific tasks – in children's learning. With this, scaffolding is closely linked to Vygotsky's notions of mediation and ZPD. Scaffolding is at its best when used in children's ZPD. For the teacher, this implies that he or she is able to give the appropriate support and guidance to pupils in accordance to their ZPD (Mercer 1994:92-110, Kozulin 2003:15-38, Wood, Bruner & Ross 1976).

IE emphasizes the learning and participation of all children in mainstream classrooms. This implies classrooms to accommodate children with different learning abilities, needs and interests; according to the theories, children with different life experiences, ZPDs, and social and cultural family backgrounds. This has impact on classroom pedagogy.

2.4 Inclusive education pedagogy

To meet the principle of quality IE, some classroom practices can be pointed out as essential. In this section, I refer to these practices as inclusive education pedagogy. First, I will point out and discuss what specific methods the constructivist and socio-constructivist theories support and how these link to IE pedagogy. Thereafter, turn to the notion of instructional differentiation.

2.4.1 The theories' impact on inclusive education pedagogy

As mentioned earlier, inclusion in education concerns all pupils and not only those with learning difficulties. In this regard, IE should focus on instruction that should give all children the possibility to learn in accordance with their individual abilities, needs and interests. These abilities, needs and interests are, to different extents, affected by the life circumstances. Examples of such life circumstances are living in a rural or an urban area, having a mother tongue different from the language used for instruction, or having illiterate parents (Thomas & Loxley 2007).

As mentioned, the constructivist and socio-constructivist theories support learning environments that focus on the exploration of the individual child's learning potentials. When applying the theories to classroom practices, subjects have to be presented in different ways and with the use of different methods and materials to accommodate the potentials of the children. This is necessary because pupils may not belong within the same ZPD or may not make the same experiences in life (Tomlinson et al. 2003). Absolut truth or absolute knowledge is non-existent, and traditional instruction based on the transmission and reception of information is therefore considered an inadequate teaching strategy. Constructivism and socio-constructivism support the use of different pedagogical methods that ensure the construction and internalization of diverse knowledge rather than the memorization and transmission of standardized knowledge. In other words, learning should not be directed from the outside, it should develop from the inside. Methods like group work, problem-solving, peer-tutoring, field trips, projects and discussion sessions can support knowledge construction and internalization (Larochelle & Bednarz 1998:3-20, von Glaserfeld 1989, Terhart 2003, Wood, Bruner & Ross 1976).

Through these methods, pupils are given the opportunities to collaborate, guide and learn from each other, be creative in finding solutions to different problems, be able to link what is learnt to the practical field, and to immerse in specific topics of interest. Through the focus of individual experiences, ZPDs and personal interests, these methods have greater chance of making learning

more meaningful and the environment more stimulating (Terhart 2003, Tomlinson et al. 2003, UNESCO 2009). Also, according to UNESCO (2009), learning is more likely to occur in classrooms where active learning and support is practiced (UNESCO 2009). The use of such pedagogical practices makes implications for the role of the teacher.

Teachers' roles

The theories do not only make a fundament for what IE pedagogy should be used, they also make a fundament for what role the teacher should take. For teachers to successfully practice the mentioned teaching methods pedagogy, it is implied that they are to help and guide the pupils in their own exploration and internalization of new knowledge, and to facilitate learning environments that enables this. This includes making sure that pupils understand the topics and concepts, recognizing pupil's strengths and weaknesses, and guiding them in accordance to those strengths and weaknesses. Assessment of each pupil's abilities and interests is therefore essential. Children's learning can through this be seen as an assessment of teacher's pedagogical work; their use of the teaching strategies, abilities to individualize teaching methods and materials, and abilities to assess and appropriately guide the pupils (Terhart 2003, UNESCO 2009). For teachers to be able to carry out the mentioned methods and to support, guide and assess each pupil – for teachers to practice IE pedagogy - low teacher-pupil ratio is essential (Pijl, Meijer & Hegarty 1997).

It can here be concluded that the constructivist and socio-constructivist theories make supportive fundaments to the principle of quality IE; they emphasize that learning and development is individual, based on personal experiences, and take place in active interaction with and through guidance from other adults or peers. The theories therefore serve as necessary underlying philosophies for practical implementation of the quality principle of IE.

2.4.2 Instructional differentiation

For teachers to be able to practice any of the above mentioned teaching methods and strategies for the purpose they present – to the benefit of pupils learning - they need to apply instructional differentiation. This implies a differentiated use of the teaching strategies and the application of different teaching and learning materials (Heacox 2002). Even though many classes are characterized as homogeneous, most pupils differ from each other in several ways; economic and social background, life experiences, interests, level of motivation etc. These differences are most likely to make an impact on their learning; be it their preferred learning activities, paces or

school subjects. Due to this, differentiated instruction does not only benefit those with learning difficulties, it also benefits pupils with no signs of having or developing a learning difficulty; differentiation is an essential strategy to make sure that every child gets the possibility to learn in school and hence to eliminate marginalization or segregation from access to learning. However, this implies that the teacher is able to assess and evaluate every pupil's abilities, needs and interests to the extent necessary (Tomlinson et al. 2003, UNESCO 1993).

The most popular ways of differentiating instruction are related to content, process, teaching aids and products (Heacox 2002, Tomlinson 2001). Content differentiation refers to teachers providing pupils with content goals related to their individual abilities. This can be done by giving pupils different materials, levels and/or quantity of content (Heacox 2002, Tomlinson 2001). Process differentiation refers to the use of a variety of teaching programs that can meet the preferred learning activities and conditions of all pupils, such as group work, individual work, projects, or different time schedules (Heacox 2002, Tomlinson 2001). In terms of product differentiation, the way in which teachers choose to assess or test their pupils is essential (Tomlinson 2001). Lastly, differentiation of teaching aids can be met by using different textbooks, audiovisual materials such as pictures and videos, information and communication technologies (ICT) etc. With this form of differentiation, pupils get the opportunity to be introduced to topics and contents in different ways (Heacox 2002).

Classroom practices supporting IE thus contrasts sharply from traditional classroom practices. Traditional classroom practices are mainly characterized by the teacher giving instruction on a specific and set topic presented in curriculums or syllabuses, and pupils' performing written assignments in accordance to the instruction (Heacox 2002). Such traditional practices focus on the transmission of knowledge, rather than the internalization of knowledge.

2.5 Factors that can impact implementation of inclusive education

In addition to differentiated instruction or classroom practices, some policy, school and cultural factors can be identified as critical for the development and implementation of IE. These factors concern issues related to national education policies, curriculum and syllabus content, the allocation of materials and facilities, and teachers' attitudes and knowledge.

2.5.1 Policy factors

For IE to successfully reach school levels it needs to be accounted for in national education policies, with clearly outlined goals on children's rights to and in education. However, for inclusion in education to be successful, the notions of inclusion have to be accounted for not only in the field of education. It also needs to be accounted for in other fields regarding economic and social development, such as early childhood care and education (ECCE), healthcare etc. This is important because inclusion involves all levels of society. Hence, for education to be inclusive, society needs to be inclusive and vice versa (UNESCO 2009, UNESCO & MoES Spain 1994).

Another essential part of IE is the content and structure of curriculums and syllabuses. A typical characteristic of an inclusive curriculum is flexibility. Flexibility gives teachers the possibilities to make adjustments in terms of methods, content and time used, to better fit each pupil; it gives them the possibility to differentiate instruction. The content and structure of curriculums and syllabuses can thus be part of either eliminating or producing (potential) learning difficulties. An inclusive curriculum should also focus on the full development of the child; the cognitive, emotional, creative and social development (Mittler 2000, UNESCO 2009). However, implementation it is up to the individual teacher. Presence of any of the factors mentioned in the next section may further impact the implementation. The curriculum itself can thus not solely cater for successful implementation of IE.

2.5.2 School factors

Of the main and most obvious school factors that can impact implementation of IE, are those of large class sizes, limited teaching time, lack of resources, insufficient school buildings and teacher's work loads (Pijl, Meijer & Hegarty 1997, Pijl & Meijer 1997:8-13, UNESCO 2009). The level of barriers these factors may impose on teachers' practices can further be influenced by their attitudes towards and knowledge of IE. Several researches show that positive attitudes, previous experiences and knowledge of IE positively influence teachers' IE practices in school (Kuyini & Desai 2007, UNESCO 2009).

Closely linked with this is teachers' educational training and qualifications. Teacher education can thus be seen as a prerequisite for practices of quality IE, however, only if teacher education is in line with the goals and principles of IE. If teachers are not trained in line with these, school-level implementation of IE cannot be expected to be met (UNESCO 2009).

Another aspect that is closely linked with teachers' attitudes is the notion of the hidden curriculum. The hidden curriculum refers to what pupils' learn in school that is not explicitly intended through the written or overt curriculum. It refers to children's socialization through teachers' implicit transmission of values and behaviors, gender or social roles, moral and social responsibilities, or student-teacher relationships (Kubow & Fossum 2007, UNESCO 2009). Since inclusion is concerned about individual diversity and the acceptance and respect of these diversities, it is important that teachers reflect on these aspects of the hidden curriculum. For example, teachers' negative attitudes towards IE or disabilities among pupils may not only result in less willingness for the practical implementation of it, it may also result in a transmission of the negative attitudes to their pupils. In turn, this may affect the learning environment, and especially for those having a disability, being socially or economically disadvantaged or experiencing learning difficulties. These issues may further reflect cultural issues, such as how teachers view children and learning, and how they view disability. The implications cultural factors can have on implementation of IE is discussed in the following section.

2.5.3 Cultural factors

Bruner's *Folk pedagogy*

When studying aspects of educational institutions and approaches in a specific culture, it is important to take that culture into account. Bruner (1996) mentions that within the field of education, the cultural context in which the education takes place will determine how teachers, parents and communities view children and learning. This view will again determine how they go on about educational practices in the classroom; the pedagogy, which Bruner labeled *Folk pedagogy*. In accordance to this, Bruner (1996) presents four dominant models of people's conceptions about children's minds and the implications they make for classroom pedagogy.

The first model is linked to the idea that children learn through imitation. This model implies that children can learn skills once demonstrated by adults. In school context it means that pupils can learn how to do things by imitating teachers. However, this model is more concerned about children's abilities, skills or talents to imitate, rather than children's knowledge and understanding (Bruner 1996).

The second model contains the assumption that children's minds are tabula rasas – clean slates – that need to be filled up. Knowledge in this model is presented by the facts, principles and rules existing in the society, and that it is through teacher's teaching that pupils fill up their minds with

this knowledge. Whether children are successful in filling up their tabula rasas depend on their abilities to absorb and store the information teachers are presenting in class. The measuring of their mental abilities (level of their stored information) is conducted by the use of objective and standardized testing. This can be viewed in contrast to the first model, where the child is rather taught how to do something skillfully. However, this model does not touch upon interpretation or construction. It simply concerns the one-way communication that moves from teachers to pupils (Bruner 1996).

The third model, on the other hand, is concerned about societies where teachers and parents view children as thinkers. In this model, teachers emphasize classroom activities that recognize pupils' perspective in the process of learning. They view their pupils as dialog partners, and use discussion and collaboration as core activities to foster understanding and learning. Knowledge and understanding is not one-sided, and it is through discussion and collaboration that pupils can be introduced to and better understand its complexity. The pedagogy of this model is pointed in the direction of everyone getting to know each other's ways of thinking through interactive learning and experiencing (Bruner 1996).

The pedagogy of the forth and last model is explained through the assumption that children are knowledgeable; children are viewed as individuals able to manage justified or objective knowledge. Teaching should therefore not only concentrate on the presentation of facts, principles and rules, as teaching presented in the second model. It should also concentrate on making clear to pupils the distinction between personal (subjective) ideas or knowledge and justified (objective) knowledge (Bruner 1996). With regards to the mentioned theories on teaching and learning, one can see a close link between these theories and Bruner's third and forth model of *folk pedagogy*; for quality IE to take place, the constructivist and socio-constructivist theories serve as valuable underlying philosophies, and through those philosophies follow models three and four in Bruner's *Folk pedagogy*.

Learning difficulties and disabilities as individually or socially determined

In the fields of disability, special education and IE, there is ongoing debate on what constitutes a learning disability or difficulty and what causes it. Since IE often focuses on children with difficulties, this debate may be of importance in the discussion on its successful implementation.

Generally, the debate is characterized by two opposing views: the difficulty or disability being linked to individual characteristics on the one hand and the difficulty or disability being linked to

the society and schooling system on the other hand. If a difficulty or disability is accused to be caused by individual factors, the attention is exclusively focused on the specific individual characteristic; the impairment, socio-economic background, psychological attributes etc. With this view, schools and teachers try to detect the individual characteristics and accommodate teaching according to it. In many cases, this implies that professional assistance, segregated units or special material recourses are put in place for the individual pupil to learn (Ainscow 1994, Anthony 2011, Peters 2004, Terzi 2005, UNESCO 1993).

If a difficulty or disability is, on the other hand, accused to be caused by structures of societies or schools, the individual difficulty is not seen as the prime barrier to learning. Within this view, a person may experience having a learning difficulty due to the way the society or the school is structured. Barriers to learning are thus either of physical, social, cultural, political or economic character, and never (solely) of individual character. This implies that every child may experience a learning difficulty. Due to that, teachers and schools have to make sure they provide instruction or organize classes that can prevent pupils from experiencing or developing learning difficulties (Ainscow 1994, Anthony 2011, Peters 2004, Terzi 2005, UNESCO 1993).

According to this and Bruner's *Folk pedagogy*, it can be argued that, for successful implementation of IE, there are two prerequisites paramount for schools, teachers and communities to be in the possession of; 1) the view of learning difficulties as socially rather than individually determined, and 2) the view of children as thinkers or knowledgeable rather than imitators or blank slates. Bruner (1996) further mentions that in order to change or improve educational practices, conceptions about children and learning need to be changed. This involves a change in teachers' and parents', as well as communities' and political documents' assumptions about children's minds and abilities to learn (Bruner 1996). With this, one can argue that how a culture and its teachers, parents and communities view children and learning will impact the aims and purposes put on education as well as educational practices. According to Mittler (2000), IE entails a fundamental change in society and people's assumptions about human capacity. It also implies people to see education structures rather than children as the cause of problems (UNESCO 2009).

2.6 Significant prior research from Ghana

One research that is directly related to the topic of this thesis is a research conducted by Kuyini and Desai in 2008. This research focused on the provision of instruction to children with learning

difficulties in inclusive classrooms in Ghana. It examined the instructional practices of teachers and, in relation to that, teachers' background information. In terms of instructional practices towards children with difficulties, the research found that some methods were consistently practiced, while others were rarely practiced. Among the consistently practiced methods were knowledge review, independent practice assignments and the use of the same curriculum materials. Classroom practices such as individual or group work, peer tutoring, multi-level teaching and the use of adaptive instructional and curriculum materials and individual educational plans (IEPs) were rarely used. In terms of teacher backgrounds, it showed that both training and experience with disabled pupils impact instructional strategies in positive direction. This means that teachers with training in IE or experience working with disabled pupils use more adaptive instructional strategies than teachers without such training and experience.

In terms of school barriers to the practices of IE, the research conducted by Kuyini and Desai in 2007 is of importance. With the title Principles' and teachers' attitudes and knowledge of inclusive education as predictors of effective teaching practices in Ghana, this research examined whether or not teachers' attitudes towards and knowledge of IE affects the effectiveness of their teaching practices. The concluding remark of the research is that, teachers' attitudes towards including children with disabilities into mainstream classes and their knowledge of IE has a great effect on their classroom practices. This means that the more positive attitudes towards and the more knowledge about IE, the more successful and effective teaching will be. With this, the study showed that beliefs and attitudes together with level of knowledge determine how effective implementation of IE practices in Ghanaian schools is.

Another important research conducted in the field of Ghana is one concerned about national conceptualizations of disability and its implications for educational opportunities. Here, culture in both education and society as a whole play important roles (Anthony 2011). Anthony (2011) argues that, in Ghanaian national belief systems disability is viewed as individually rather than socially determined, while internationally disability is viewed as socially rather than individually determined. In this regard, she argues that, national education policies are influenced by international principles and guidelines, and that national policies therefore are conflicted between national belief systems based on the individual model of disability and international principles and guidelines based on the social model of disability.

3 Conceptual framework

In this chapter I will present the conceptual framework of this thesis. This conceptual framework is based on the issues raised and discussed in chapters one and two, and makes a fundament for discussions in the following chapters. First, I will define inclusive education (IE). To offer a better understanding of the essence of IE, I will thereafter make a distinction between segregation, integration and inclusion in education. A distinction between these educational approaches highlights the educational provision for children with learning disabilities. Thereafter, I will discuss how national adoption and implementation of IE is linked to three levels of involvement; the government level, the college or university level, and the school and classroom level. Lastly, I will present the importance of assessment of the issues raised, achievements made and factors that can impact the development, adoption and implementation of IE at all levels.

3.1 Inclusive education

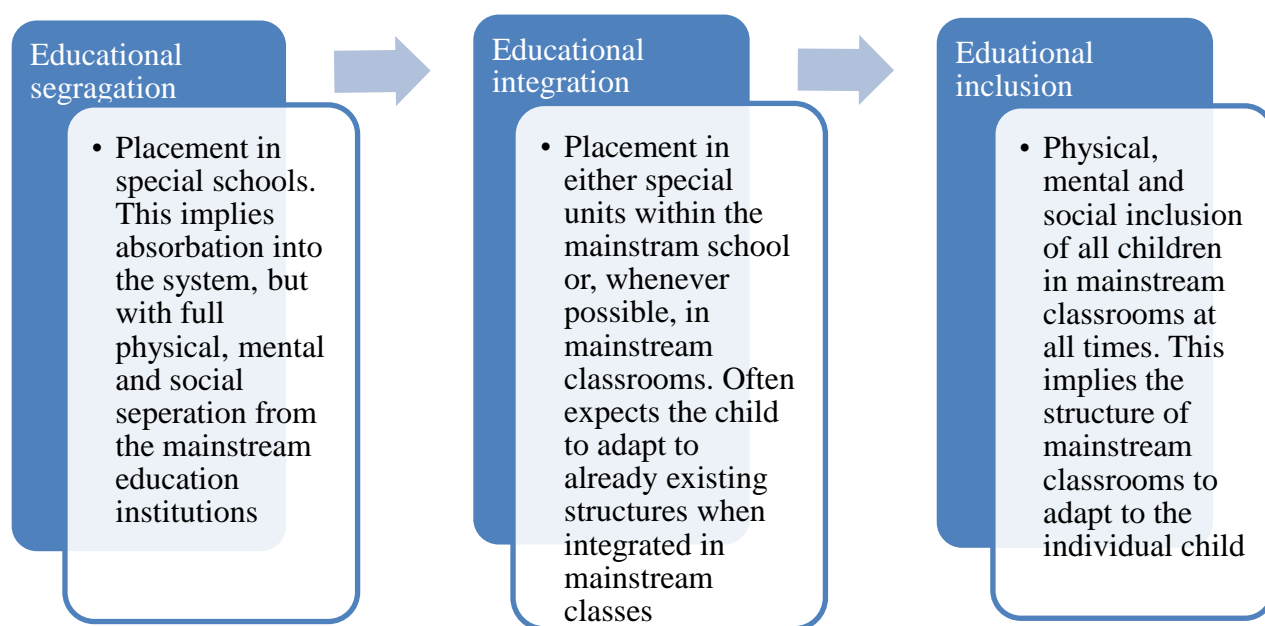
IE refers to an educational approach that is linked to two aspects of human rights in education; the rights to and in education. The first entails all children to access the mainstream (regular) education classroom. The second refers to all children's learning and participating in that classroom. Such an educational approach implies no discrimination and all barriers to be removed (UNESCO & MoES Spain 1994). IE is, however, often defined with a focus on the educational access and quality of those with specific disabilities or difficulties only. This may lead to an exclusion of pupils with no (visible and/or recognized) learning disabilities or difficulties. Further, there is little to IE if the aspect of quality is ignored. Without the quality aspect, IE becomes integration in a different suit.

3.1.1 Development of inclusive education

The international development of IE can be identified through three phases of educational provision for disadvantaged children; educational segregation, educational integration and educational inclusion (see model 3.1). The first phase – educational segregation – is linked to the early attempts to provide education for children with specific disabilities or disadvantages. This educational provision is characterized by children receiving education in special schools based on their specific disability. Such schools are fully separated from mainstream education (Ferguson 2008, Sebba & Ainscow 1996, Tomlinson 1985).

The second phase - educational integration – refers to an approach that attempts at providing education for disabled and disadvantaged children within mainstream institutions. This attempt was driven by growing international obligations to meet human rights on social justice and equal opportunities. Accordingly, through integration children were placed in mainstream classrooms or in special units within mainstream institutions. However, the children received education in mainstream classes only when they were expected to benefit from it. Special arrangements were therefore often not provided. As a result, it was often expected of the children to be able to learn through the provision of normal classroom instruction once integrated in mainstream classrooms (Ferguson 2008, Vislie 2003, Wade & Moore 1992).

As a response to the criticisms towards educational integration for being yet another way of segregating disabled and disadvantages children, came the third phase - educational inclusion. This refers to an approach that aims at disadvantaged children’s opportunities to receive and benefit from education through mainstream classrooms at all times. This implies classroom instructions to make provision for their individual needs. Such educational inclusion is expected to ensure social justice and equal opportunities (Ferguson 2008, UNESCO & MoES Spain 1994).



Model 3.1: The international development towards IE

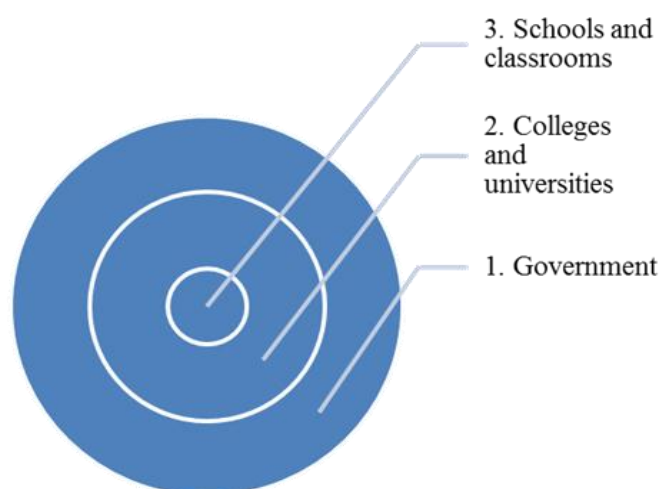
With regards to national development of IE, the Salamanca statement (UNESCO & MoES, Spain 1994) emphasizes that well established special schools for children with specific impairments or disabilities may serve as a valuable starting point for the development of IE. This is because the

expertise on these children's learning abilities and possibilities are already established and therefore easily transferable from special to mainstream schools. One may therefore expect the focus established in special schools to be transferred to inclusive schools. In the next section I will take a closer look at national development and implementation of IE,

3.2 National adoption and implementation of inclusive education

3.2.1 Three levels of inclusive education

National adoption and implementation of IE can be explained as a process with three levels of involvement. These levels are 1) the government, where national policies and guidelines are produced, 2) colleges and universities, where future teachers are prepared for the practical implementation of the issues concerning IE, and 3) schools and classrooms, where practical implementation takes place. This is the level where IE directly reaches the children themselves; it constitutes the core of IE. These three levels of involvement are presented in model 3.2:



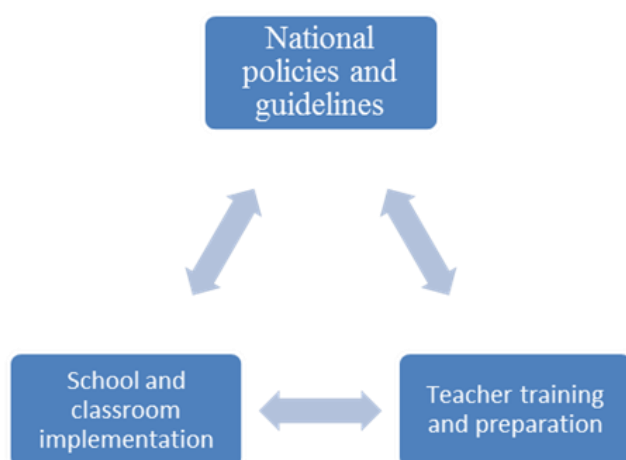
Model 3.2: Levels of IE

At the government level, national education policies state national goals and purposes for IE. These goals and purposes may be presented through national education plans, other written documents either published by the government itself or international organizations, or presented at international conferences concerning education. Also basic school syllabuses state important goals for education, and may give suggestions of practical implementation strategies. At the level of colleges and universities, future teachers are prepared for actual implementation of IE. This

preparation is based on the aims of teacher education as presented in the curriculums used at colleges and universities. At the school and classroom level, IE reaches the children themselves. This is the core level of IE; the level where IE benefit the children. In other words, for IE not to appear in linguistic terms only, school and classroom implementation should be at the heart of the agenda. With the principles of IE, this level should not only concern the access provided to the children, it should also concern pedagogical practices used in classroom teaching. Applying constructivist and socio-constructivist theories on teaching and learning, these practices should be directed towards every child's individual exploration towards new knowledge and skills. These require child-centered teaching and learning activities, such as group work, field trips and projects, where children can use their own experiences based on their own life circumstances (Laroche & Bednarz 1998:3-20, Terhart 2003, Wood, Bruner & Ross 1976).

3.2.2 Assessment for development

IE is a never ending process and not a single event or a status quo (Ainscow 2005); it is under continuing development. For successful develop of IE, sufficient assessment of issues and achievements at all three levels is therefore of high importance. Through such assessment, weaknesses and gaps between the levels can be identified for necessary future adjustments. For example, if IE is not successfully implemented at school and classroom levels, one may have to assess levels one and two to find out whether there may be weaknesses at these levels or gaps between them making implementation difficult. On the other hand, IE may be successfully implemented despite limited national policies and guidelines. In such cases, reported school practices may lead to new and adopted focus at government and teacher training levels. All levels therefore mutually influence one another, as presented in model 3.3:



Model 3.3: The levels of IE and their interaction with each other

For the assessment of IE itself, two different notions can be used; Tomasevski's 4-A's scheme and the notions of educational input, process, output and outcomes.

3.2.3 Accessibility, availability, acceptability and adaptability

These four A's adopted by Tomasevski concern an assessment of four obligations put on national governments through international laws on the rights to education. These are the obligations to make education accessible, available, acceptable and adaptable to all. In relation to IE these obligations concern education and schools to be, among other, fee-free; physically and socially available; socially, physically and emotionally acceptable; and adaptable to the individual child's abilities, needs and interests (Tomasevski 2003). According to Tomasevski (2003), these are government obligations. However, for IE to reach the children themselves, schools and teachers are also obliged to meet these goals. Assessment of IE in terms of the 4-A's scheme must therefore be done at both government and school levels.

3.2.4 Educational input, process, output and outcomes

Closely linked to the assessment of IE are also the notions of educational input, process, output and outcomes. In terms of input, IE can be assessed from three different aspects; the school, the student and the family and/or community. These three refer to the allocation of school buildings that are accessible to all, curriculum content, resources such as well trained teachers, textbooks and other teaching materials; economic and social characteristics, values and attitudes among pupils, parents and communities (Peters 2004, Chang 2008).

Educational process refers to how the inputs are used to achieve educational results; be it how teachers use and adapt time, textbooks and other teaching and learning materials, how they express their attitudes towards children and learning, or how they organized classroom seating. High quality of these inputs and processes are necessary prerequisites for education to accommodate all pupils and their wide range of abilities, interests and needs; they are prerequisites for IE and pupils' learning (ibid).

Educational output and outcomes, on the other hand, both refer to pupils' actual achievements or attainments – test achievements or formal completion that can benefit the future of individuals, families and societies (ibid). Based on this, one can argue that through IE the outcomes of pupils' academic work may increase in terms of being beneficial to the pupil. In other words,

with focusing on IE at input and process levels, one can assume that the (personal) quality at the output and outcome levels will increase.

With a focus on the quality aspect of IE – the IE pedagogy - educational inputs and processes therefore constitute important factors of analysis. Based on the mentioned three levels of IE, input refers to national policies and guidelines, and teaching materials and resources provided. Process, on the other hand, refers to how teachers use the policies and materials provided.

3.2.5 Factors impacting the three levels

In the literature review three factors are mentioned as important for any successful implementation of IE; policy factors, school factors and cultural factors. The policy and school factors that are likely to impact the three mentioned levels are national policies, basic school syllabuses, teacher education and attitudes, and the allocation of resources such as teaching and learning materials, teaching time and school buildings. However, it is important also to be conscious of how cultural factors can impact the adoption and implementation of IE. In this regard, Bruner's model of *folk pedagogy* is of high importance. This model explains how teachers' perceptions about children and learning may affect their teaching strategies used in class (Bruner 1996). Linked to this are also the models of disability; the individual versus the social model.

With regards to cultures' impact on education it is important to ask questions concerning how IE is defined, what children are taken into account and how children, disabilities and learning are perceived among teachers and other school, university or government employees. For example, is IE defined in terms of access or quality, or both? How are children's learning and development directly and indirectly perceived? Are disabilities socially or individually defined and explained? Does IE seem to be accounting for all pupils or for pupils with specific disabilities or disadvantages only? And if so, what disabilities or disadvantages are being accounted for? These cultural issues may especially be of importance at the third level; the school and classroom level. This is because peoples' belief systems may be more apparent at practical levels compared to policy levels, since it is at practical levels the actual interaction between teachers and pupils take place. Here, the notion of the hidden curriculum is of great importance. Through the hidden curriculum, one may be able to detect peoples' perceptions that are not directly expressed (Kubow & Fossum 2007).

4 Contextualization

The actual fieldwork for this research was carried out in the Greater Accra Region, Ghana. Before turning to the next chapters on methodology and data presentation, discussion and conclusion, it is necessary to draw a picture of how the education system is in Ghana. In relation to the topic of this thesis – IE - this chapter is concerned about the structure of the education system, national objectives of education, teacher training, factors that impact educational marginalization in Ghana and the link between these factors and learning difficulties. Lastly, a short presentation of the two selected schools is given.

4.1 Ghana

In 1957, the former Gold Coast attained independence from British rule, as the first colonized country in sub-Saharan Africa to do so. However, the country has had internal self-governance since 1951. Modern Ghana is a country of 238,540 square meters and 24,4 million inhabitants (per 2010) located by the Gulf of Guinea in the West African region (Avoke 2001, George 1976, Gocking 2005, World Bank 2012-05-20). Ghana is divided between ten administrative regions and 110 districts, stretching from the urban South to the rural North (Naidoo 2002).



4.2 Brief education history

By the time of self-governance and independence, under the influence by country leader and in later years president Kwame Nkrumah and his assumption that national development only could be achieved by educating as many children as possible, Ghana experienced a heavy increase in the provision of education facilities from the early years of the 1950's to the mid-1960's. This expansion resulted in nearly 7000 new primary schools and an increase in primary school enrollment rate from 150.000 to 1.130.000. Additionally, new teacher training colleges were opened, so that schools would be accommodated with well-trained teachers. Also, education at primary levels was made fee-free, and ten years later, with the new Education Act of 1961 it was made compulsory. However, in the years after Nkrumah - with Ghana's new government in the mid-1960s - the expenditure used on primary education decreased. This resulted in a halt in the establishment of new schools, as well as a decrease in pupil enrollment rates and the closing up of old schools. From 1966 to 1971 the number of schools had decreased from 8100 to 6700, and the number of pupils decreased from 1.130.000 to 960.000. With president Rawlings' government in the 1980s, however, basic education regained attention. Several educational reforms were put in place to improve access, quality and educational infrastructure. From 1980 towards the millennium, the number of basic schools increased from 12.997 to 18.374 (Akyeampong 2010, George 1976, Hayford 2007). In 2009, 3.099.234 pupils were enrolled in public primary schools. The average pupil-teacher ratio was 30.6, and an estimated 58% of all teachers were trained (MoE 2011A).

4.3 The current education system of Ghana

Per 2007, the structure of the basic education system in Ghana has been divided into three categories or levels of basic education with a total amount of eleven years of schooling starting from the age of four and ending at the age of 15; two years of pre-school education, six years of primary education, and three years of junior secondary education. Additionally, the education system consists of four years of senior secondary education and tertiary education. Primary education is divided into two three-year cycles called lower primary and upper primary education. The lower primary education includes children from the age of six to the age of nine, while the upper primary education includes children from the age of nine to the age of 12. The language of instruction is Ghanaian languages at lower primary levels, and English from upper primary levels to universities (Akyeampong et al. 2007, Avoke 2001, GES 2004, MoE 2011A, UNESCO & IBE 2010/2011).

In terms of education decentralization and management, there is an emphasis on the improvement of efficiency, quality and district responsibilities in education service delivery. These responsibilities are divided between the government, the regions, the districts, the communities and the schools. The district level is responsible for school management, budgeting and supervision, and school data collection and analysis. Further, district level is accountable for reporting on the status of these issues to their regional office, where the supervision of the districts lies. The community and school levels, on the other hand, are responsible for their own school-level educational planning, management and decision-making. With this form of decentralization, there is an aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning in each school. However, all these levels have an overall accountability for implementing education policies set by the government. Centralized responsibilities thus remain at the level of the establishment of education norms and guidelines, in addition to general education finance distribution (Akyeampong 2010, Akyeampong et al. 2007, GES 2004, MoE 2011A, Naidoo 2002).

Mainstream education in Ghana refers to regular education that is provided to children. In addition to this, are two types of government provided basic education that target education for children who are traditionally marginalized from mainstream education; special and inclusive education. Following, I will give an introduction to these two education provisions.

4.3.1 Special education

In Ghana, the early provision of special education was heavily influenced by the British (Avoke 2001). The first special school was reported established in 1936 by missionaries. And in the 1970's and 1980's the county experienced a rapid growth in the provision of special schools. These special schools gave education to the visually impaired, the hearing impaired and the mentally disabled (Anthony 2009). Since then, special education is mainly linked to these three categories of disabilities. Traditionally, this has led to the exclusion of other categories of disabilities and disadvantages. It has even led to, as Anthony (2011) mentions, an over-representation of children with mental disabilities. However, the latter is often the case, since mental disabilities in Ghana often function as a catch-all category (Anthony 2011).

4.3.2 Inclusive education

As with the development of special education, the development of inclusive education (IE) in Ghana has had major influence from the international field, including the Salamanca Statement and Education for All (EFA) as discussed in section 2.1 (Anthony 2011). IE has been on the

Ghanaian agenda since the late 1990's, and in 2003/2004 the first set of inclusive schools was opened. These are mainstream schools being part of a pilot project targeting IE principles, and they are called inclusive schools to being distinguish from mainstream schools that do not target IE (Coordinator of Special Education at the Special Education Division 2011-10-06). In 2003/2004 there was a total of 35 inclusive schools in ten districts, and in 2008, the number was 129 (Anthony 2009, Anthony 2011, GES 2004). By 2015, all mainstream schools in the country are to target IE principles (MoE 2011B).

The development of policies on IE is to be mandated by the Special Education Division (SED) of Ghana Education Service (GES), and should involve aspects of access, participation, quality and inclusion (GES 2004). In the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) of 2010-2020 IE is represented as an approach where schools are designed so that they can accommodate pupils with disabilities and disadvantages to enhance their right equal educational opportunities, and to inclusion and participation in other societal affairs (MoE 2011A).

However, Avoke (2001) stated that “while trends are increasingly shifting towards inclusive practices, the institutionalization of people with learning difficulties and others with disabilities remains an entrenched practice” (Avoke 2001; 29). Anthony (2009, 2011) additionally mentions that, even though there are increasing commitments towards IE, the country experiences ongoing expansion of segregated services for disabled children, with an increased 51% enrollment rate of pupils to special schools from 2001 to 2007. This is despite that the number of inclusive schools in the country has risen. A reason for this may be that the inclusive schools show a trend of most often accommodating children with non-severe disabilities, and that children with moderate or severe disabilities are expected to attend special schools or segregated (technical/vocational) units (Anthony 2009, Anthony 2011). However, one should not exclude the possibility that this increase is due to an overall expansion of educational services for children with disabilities - either in special or inclusive schools. This is discussed in more detail in chapter six.

4.4 Objectives of education

Since independence, one of the first and remaining aims of education in Ghana is to improve educational access for all children. As mentioned in section 4.1.1, there have been several policy attempts in Ghana to provide universal primary education through fee-free and compulsory education programs since the early days of self-governance and independence. One of the latest policy programs put in place to secure all children's access to education was the Free and

Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) program launched in 1996. The focus of this program was to give the government the obligation to provide fee-free and compulsory education to all children. Further, the FCUBE focused on the provision of free teaching and learning materials so that every child should not only access schools but also learn while in school (Akyeampong 2009).

This leads to a second objective of education in Ghana; quality. By the time of independence and specifically after the education reforms of the 1980's, education in Ghana aimed and still aims at quality improvement. The purpose of quality education is put on the development of manpower for the country's social and economic growth. In the latest years, education reforms and programs have been directed towards education that is relevant for Ghana's socio-economic realities and for children's possibilities of living productive and meaningful lives in accordance to that reality. More specifically, for individuals to contribute to the country's socio-economic development, it is emphasized that education should focus on the intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical development of all individuals. This implies improved quality of teaching and learning (Akyeampong 2010, GES 2004, MoE 2011A, MoE 2011B, UNESCO & IBE 2010/2011). In this regard, the ESP 2010-2020 states that all teachers and pupils shall have access to materials, books, and resource centers that can support and enhance their teaching and learning (MoE 2011A, MoE 2011B).

Despite attempts to improve both access to and quality of basic education since independence and specifically the last few decades, access to education has had an overall greater improvement compared to quality of education. While there has been a steady increase in student enrollment rates to basic education, achievement tests in English and mathematics from 2007 show that pupils' performances are poor. For example, among pupils at the last year of primary school, 70% performed at the minimum competency level in English, and 48% performed at the minimum competency level in mathematics (Akyeampong 2010, USAID 2009).

4.5 Teacher training

The first TTC to specialize within special education in Ghana was established in 1965. At the time of establishment, the college gave teacher students training in the education of the deaf. In 1975 another college was established; the Presbyterian Training College in Akropong-Akwapim, where training for the education of the blind was given. However, by 1985 these two colleges were integrated and expanded their field of education to include special training for the

education of the mentally disabled. This specialist college, under the name College of Special Education, consisted of a two year program of intensive preparation within the specific subject areas or disciplines. These two years were to be taken in addition to normal teacher training at certificate level. In 1992, the College was upgraded to university level, and the specialist certificate was replaced with degree programs and diplomas at the University of Education, Winneba (Avoke 2001). During the last few years, TTCs have also been upgraded from certificate to diploma level. This implies three years of teacher training, where teacher students are admitted after completed senior secondary education (Tutor at Accra Teacher Training 2011-09-20).

IE, on the other hand, was first introduced to Ghanaian teacher training in the 1990's through the governments' commitment to meet the goals enshrined in the Salamanca statement. Today, training and courses in special and inclusive education are given at the universities in Winneba and Cape Coast through undergraduate and postgraduate programs, and at several TTCs through diplomas (Avoke 2001, Kuyini & Mangope 2011). Additionally, in-service teacher training is given for teachers to improve their teaching and learning in basic schools (GES 2004, UNESCO 2010/2011).

Many trained teachers in Ghana have had their training from a TTC. At these colleges, IE and the teaching of children with learning difficulties is given special attention under the topics pupil-centered methods of teaching, categories of special needs children and children with learning disabilities. Within these topics, teacher students are taught what methods of teaching and supportive materials should be used in class, how to characterize and identify a learning disability, what categories of impairments or disabilities underlie a child's learning difficulty, and the use of IE in teaching (IoE, UCC 2005).

4.6 Marginalization in education

Since the education reforms from the late 1980's and the FCUBE program from 1996, there has been a steady improvement in the access to basic education, with a gross enrollment rate in primary schools increasing from 87% in 2003 to 94% in 2006. However, completion rates remain lower, with 85% in 2009 (Akyeampong 2009, Akyeampong 2010, USAID 2009). Different factors are identified in regards to why some children never enter or complete primary school levels. Among these factors are poverty, child labor, school location, disabilities, health issues, and school organization (UNESCO 2010).

4.6.1 Marginalization and learning difficulties

As mentioned earlier, children with learning difficulties in Ghana are most often referred to as children having a visual, hearing or mental disability. Children falling out of this categorization of learning disabilities are most likely to be included in the category of ‘normal’ children (Hayford 2007). However, in later years the focus seem to have expanded to include street children, children with health issues, children with dyslexia, talented children, children with behavior or communication problems etc. (IoE, UCC 2005).

These categories of children are at greater risk of being marginalized from access to education. This can imply that children who are disadvantaged in any aspect of life are children under risk of having or developing a learning difficulty. According to UNESCO, children who are marginalized from access to education are often also marginalized from quality education (UNESCO 2010). And according to Hayford (2007), children with learning difficulties who fall under the category of ‘normal’ children are in Ghana most likely not to receive any attention in terms of pedagogical interventions (Hayford 2007). These children may thus not only be at risk of being marginalized from access to education, once in school they may also be at risk of being marginalized from learning. This can be emphasized by using the example of language of instruction; learning is evidenced to be more efficient and successful when the language of instruction is fully understood by the child. If the language of instruction is not the one spoken or even understood at home, the child may thus experience difficulties learning. Further, they may not have the chance of being supported with home work, since their parents may also have difficulties understanding the language of instruction (UNESCO 2010). Many non-child characteristics can thus be identified as crucial for children’s learning opportunities. It is therefore important for schools to accommodate all pupils in accordance with the circumstances of their lives; their interests, needs and (learning) abilities.

5 Methodology

The purpose of this thesis is to explore inclusive education (IE) in Ghana. According to the presented literature review and conceptual framework, this exploration concerns three levels of IE that mutually influence one another; the government, colleges and universities, and school and classroom levels. These three levels together influence implementation and success of IE. The links between the three levels are thus necessary for the exploration of the nature of IE in Ghana. The government and colleges and university levels are linked to schools and classroom levels by using the examples of two selected government primary schools in the Greater Accra Region. These two schools apply different educational approaches – mainstream and inclusion – and a comparison between these two approaches may further highlight the practices of IE compared to ‘normal’ school practices. For this purpose, the following research questions are asked:

- 1: To what extent and in what ways has the principle of inclusive education been adopted in the Ghanaian context?*
- 2: How has inclusive education been implemented and how do different approaches compare?*
- 3: How can quality inclusive education contribute to improved learning in the Ghanaian environment and what are the challenges?*

In this chapter, the designs, strategies and methods used for the gathering of data are discussed.

5.1 The qualitative approach

My standpoint in social research is subjective. It is based on the belief that social phenomena are socially constructed by participant individuals (Bryman 2004). This research tries to explore the meanings of IE as adopted in the Ghanaian context. I have therefore chosen to use the qualitative research approach.

Research based on the qualitative approach focuses on the meanings and is presented in thick descriptions of contexts, cases and/or concepts. It tries to explore and explain specific topics in specific contexts. Close and deep investigation of one or a few cases bears a greater concern in qualitative research than the possibility to generalize. In qualitative research, the participant is expected to give detailed rather than general information on the features of the specific case under investigation (Bray et al. 2007, Bryman 2008, Creswell 2003). Another purpose of

qualitative research is to offer new or broaden already existing theory. This means that one is not necessarily using theory as a major guideline for the research, but using the data collected to make new or expand existing theories. This is referred to as induction (Bray et al. 2007, Bryman 2008). I am using existing literature, theory and research to guide this thesis. However, the purpose is not to fit my findings into these, but to have my findings contribute to new information that may expand them or create new ones.

5.2 Comparative research design

According to Bray, Adamson & Mason (2007), comparative social research within the field of education is about multilevel analysis of education phenomena. These phenomena can either be 1) demographic groups, such as gender groups or religious groups, 2) geographical levels, such as schools, classrooms or regions, or 3) other aspects of education, such as curriculum or teaching methods. Based on these phenomena, comparative research basically aims at finding similarities and/or differences between two or more cases; it is research that tries to compare institutions, organizations or traditions within specific contexts (Bray, Adamson & Mason 2007).

This research tries, among others, to detect and explore similarities and/or differences of teaching practices at two schools applying different educational approaches; one mainstream school and one inclusive school. To compare the practices of IE at these two schools, I have partly followed a comparative research design. For the purpose of comparing, this implies that the same research methods are applied in both schools; the same questions were asked to the teachers, the same observation guide and principles were used, and there was an equal amount of observation time. Only this way is the researcher able to, as accurately as possible, detect similarities and/or differences between two or more cases (Bryman 2008).

5.3 Units of analysis

School teachers, a tutor at a TTC, professors at universities, and experts on basic education, IE and curriculum development are the units of analysis. The teachers participating in this research are both classroom and resource teachers. Classroom teachers were important participants, since it was their classroom practices I observed. Interviews with these teachers were used to back up and better understand the observations. Further, due to the close link between school implementation level and teacher preparation level, as was discussed in chapters two and three, a tutor at Accra TTC was interviewed. Finally, to get insights into what the issues of IE are at

research and government levels in Ghana, experts in the field of basic and inclusive education and curriculum development were necessary units of analysis. The meaning and character of these interviews are discussed in section 5.5.2. These units of analysis are, however, secondary units of analysis; units of analysis that can back up the prime units of analysis – the two schools and the document analysis conducted. The latter is explained in section 5.5.3.

The prime units of analysis of this research are the two selected schools. To conduct observations of classroom practices where there are children with recognized and unrecognized learning difficulties, as well as children without learning difficulties, I chose to conduct observations of classroom practices at the upper primary levels (primary four, five and six). At these levels, it is assumed that teachers have had time to recognize whether or not they have pupils in their class with learning difficulties, and what kind of learning difficulties these are. Also, it is assumed that there is a smaller chance of pupils with learning difficulties to (yet) have dropped out of school. Thus, it is assumed that observing classroom practices at the upper primary levels gives a greater possibility of observing classes where pupils with and without recognized and unrecognized learning difficulties are included. Due to this, and in accordance with the literature review and conceptual framework, it is assumed that teachers at these levels differentiate their instruction to the benefit of all their pupils. Essential here, however, is the assumption that teachers have assessed the abilities of their pupils.

5.3.1 The mainstream school

The mainstream school selected for this research is a cluster school located in Adentan Metro. Cluster schools in Ghana are referred to as school buildings that consist of more than one school where both primary and secondary levels are included. The cluster characteristic of this mainstream school is that the school building serves two sets of primary and secondary schools during the day. Here, one school has lectures from 08.00am to 12.00pm with an additional teaching hour offered from 07.00am to 08.00am, and the other school has lectures from 12.30pm to 17.00pm. I was conducting my observations and teacher interviews during the first school-set. At the primary levels, there are 11 teachers, one head teacher (who also serve as a teacher in some classes), and a total of 320 registered pupils. At the upper primary level, there are two teachers that follow the same class. However, the teachers divide the subjects among them and teach individually. This means that there is an average of 53 pupils per class and a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:53.

5.3.2 The inclusive school

The selected inclusive school is located in Accra Metro. As with the mainstream school, this is a cluster school where primary and secondary levels are joined in the same school building.

However, in contrast to the mainstream school, the cluster at this school consists of A and B classes. Both A and B classes start at 08.00am and finish at 14.30pm. At the primary levels, there are 12 teachers, one head teacher, two resource teachers and a total of 707 registered pupils. This makes an average of 59 pupils per class. At the upper primary levels, the teachers are subject teachers and teach in both class A and B at the same level. There is one teacher in class per subject, making the teacher-pupil ratio 1:59.

5.4 Sampling

For this thesis, I have mainly used purposive and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling means that the sites and units of analysis are chosen purposively so that the researcher can interview people within the field of investigation and conduct observations of sites that are relevant for the field of investigation (Bryman 2008). In this regard, I chose both schools and interviewed participants from within the field of basic and inclusive education.

With regards to the two schools, purposive yet random sampling was used. Since I wanted to explore the practices of one mainstream and one inclusive school compared, I had to use purposive sampling to find such schools. Among the mainstream schools, I additionally randomly selected one school out of several possible options. This was done with the help of the tutor at Accra TTC. The tutor wrote down the names of all the government provided schools in a specific area. Out of a list of these names, I picked a number between one and ten. With regards to the inclusive school, on the other hand, I was only introduced to one such school in the Greater Accra Region. Due to that I did not randomly select one inclusive school over other inclusive schools.

With regards to the interviews, I chose interviewees based on their experience within the field of IE. These interviewees were people working at the Ghana Education Service (GES), Accra TTC, and the University of Cape Coast (UCC) and the University of Education Winneba (UEW). Snowball sampling was my prime sampling method for these interview participants. This form of sampling means that you let your already selected participants introduce you to or suggest other people that may be of interest to your topic and research (Bryman 2008). Before departure I had e-mail contact with one person working in the GES. After meeting this person during my

first days of field work, I got names and phone numbers of several people working within field of education, and specifically IE.

5.5 Using mixed methods

For this research, I am using four different types of methods for data collection. These methods are semi-structured observations, semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and document analysis. These are all methods within the qualitative approach, and the purpose of mixing these methods is for the complementarity of data. I chose to use these methods to get thick and descriptive data to explore IE in Ghana from the different levels. The use of different methods gave me the possibility to strengthen my findings; the interviews strengthened both my observations and document analysis, and vice versa.

Interviews with teachers, ministry officials, teacher training tutors and professors strengthened what I saw during observations. Likewise, what people told me about IE was strengthened with what I saw during observations. This was specifically helpful and necessary after conducting observations; it was helpful to ask participants about the nature of the observations I had made. With this, they explained in more detail how IE functions in Ghana, commented on the gaps between policies and practices, and rejected or confirmed conclusions I had drawn from the observations. At the same time, my observations rejected and confirmed aspects of information I collected from interviews beforehand.

Both my observations and interviews were again strengthened by the use of document analysis of national policies on education, the basic school syllabuses and the curriculum used at TTCs. Knowing in advance what these documents say about IE helped to focus observations and interviews, and made it easier to look for practices and ask questions relevant to the research. Also, after conducting classroom observations and interviews, I turned more critical of what the documents said about IE. The strengths and weaknesses in education policies, curriculums and syllabuses were more easily detected.

Using mixed methods can also ensure greater trustworthiness of the research. The use of more than one method can specifically be of importance when evaluating the credibility, also referred to as the internal validity, of the research. The credibility of the research entails that two or more methods or sources of data are used to ensure that the researcher includes as many aspects of the investigated concept(s) as possible (Bryman 2008, Creswell 2003). In other words, mixing

methods can increase the trustworthiness of the study. The evaluation criteria of this specific research are discussed in section 5.6.

5.5.1 Observations

The observations conducted in this research were semi-structured. They were 1) guided by a list of objectives related to IE practices (see table 6.1 and 6.2) and 2) consisted of note-taking of how classes were carried through and how teacher-pupil interactions were. The observation guide was based on theories on teaching and learning, as discussed in chapter two, and on the national basic school syllabuses used for the upper primary levels. With the use of such a guideline I was able to focus my observations. The observations were not randomly focusing on different aspects of classroom practices, they were focused on aspects of classroom practices that support the aims of the research (Patton 2002). Through the observation guide, aspects of teaching practices that support quality IE were under focus. This gave a little structure to my observations, and made it easier to eliminate other aspects of classroom practices. Also, by using an observation guide, comparing the two schools were based on concrete and comparable data.

5.5.2 Semi-structured interviews

Further, I have conducted semi-structured interviews. This refers to interviews that are planned and set, but at the same time flexible (Kvale & Brinkman 2009). For this research, I have used an interview guide with a list of objectives or topics under concern for each interview conducted. This gave the participants flexibility with regards to expressing their views on the topics. At the same time, it ensured me answers that were relevant (see table 5.1).

For this thesis I have conducted both one-to-one interviews and focus group interviews. The one-to-one interviews I have conducted were with different people from the GES, Accra TTC and the UCC and UEW. These people work within different aspects of education, ranging from curriculum development, special and inclusive education to teacher training and educational enrollment and provision. My interviews with people from the GES's Basic Education Division (BED) were mostly concerned about policy aspects; how IE is catered for in Ghanaian education policies, what the general reasons are for children not attending school and what is being done to bring them (back) to school. At the GES's Special Education Division (SED), on the other hand, I asked questions more specifically related to IE, such as where the focus lies (access versus quality), what the challenges are and how IE has been developed in Ghana. Most of these interviews were conducted face-to-face. However, due to different reasons such as distance and

infrastructure difficulties, some interviews were conducted per e-mail and by Skype. At Accra TTC and the UCC and UEW, I conducted interviews with professionals within teacher training, special and inclusive education and curriculum development. These interviews concerned how the school syllabuses give space for learner differences, classroom teaching practices (differentiated instruction) for IE implementation, and teacher training for IE implementation.

Focus group interviews

With focus group interviews, several participants are gathered together for an interview on a specific topic. In contrast to one-to-one interviews, focus group interviews allow the participants to create a collective meaning or understanding of the concepts of interest to the researcher (Bryman 2008, Patton 2002). I conducted focus group interviews with school teachers. This method was used to back up my classroom observations, and was focusing on what teaching methods the teachers prefer using, how they feel about IE and whether or not their educational background gave them specific training on IE and learning difficulties. A summary of the units of analysis, research strategies and methods are presented in table 5.1:

Table 5.1: Summary of the research methods used

<i>Units of analysis:</i>	<i>Sampling:</i>	<i>Methods used:</i>	<i>Topics investigated:</i>
Upper primary classrooms at the mainstream and inclusive schools	Random and purposive sampling	Semi-structured observations	1) The use of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examples and explanations - Assistive devices and resources - Creative and thinking - Group work, individual work and projects - Practical applications to real life situations - Guidance and help 2) The hidden curriculum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interaction between teachers and pupils
Classroom teachers	Purposive sampling	Focus group interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IE at the school; features and challenges - Teaching methods, differentiated instruction and assistive devices - Learning difficulties and disabilities

Resource teacher	Purposive sampling	Semi-structured interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IE at the school; features and challenges - Learning difficulties and disabilities - Teaching methods, differentiated instruction and assistive devices
Ghana Education Service – Basic Education Division	Purposive and snowball sampling	Semi-structured interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IE in Ghana; features and challenges - Data on reasons for children being out-of-school; disabilities, learning difficulties and achievements
Ghana Education Service – Special Education Division	Purposive and snowball sampling	Semi-structured interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IE in Ghana; focus and challenges - Special schools and inclusive schools – history, characteristics and numbers - Teaching methods, differentiated instruction and assistive devices - The link between IE and quality of education
Professors and researchers in Special Education and Inclusive Education	Purposive and snowball sampling	Semi-structured interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IE in Ghana; focus and challenges - Teaching methods, differentiated instruction and assistive devices - The link between IE and quality of education
Professor and researcher in Curriculum Development	Purposive and snowball sampling	Semi-structured interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School syllabuses and teaching practices - School curriculum and syllabuses for mainstream, inclusive and special schools
Tutors at Accra Teacher Training College	Purposive and snowball sampling	Semi-structured interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IE in Ghana; features and challenges - Teacher training for implementation of IE

5.5.3 Qualitative content analysis

Content analysis refers to a way of analyzing the content of documents. In qualitative research, the aim of such analysis is to find the meanings of texts presented in documents; the researcher tries to understand the meaning of concepts and categories by analyzing their appearance in document texts (Bryman 2008). In this thesis, content analysis has been used to find out how IE is catered for in the different education documents; the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) of 2010-2020, the basic school syllabuses and the curriculum used at the TTCs. Among these, I pay

specific attention to the ESP 2010-2020, because this is the overall document that serves public basic education in Ghana. The purpose is to find out how and to what extent IE is adopted in the Ghanaian context, and to what extent there is coherence of the adoption of IE at different levels. The latter refers to the assessment of IE in Ghana at different levels; government level, college and university level, and school and classroom level. As discussed in chapter three, the levels mutually influence one other and coherence between them is essential for successful implementation. Analyses of documents that affect IE at all levels is therefore essential.

5.6 Trustworthiness of the research

Qualitative research can be evaluated through the fulfillment of several criteria. These criteria include credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Traditionally, these criteria are referred to as internal and external validity, internal and external reliability, and objectivity. The fulfillment of these criteria constitutes the trustworthiness of the study, and is therefore of paramount importance.

5.6.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the level of acceptability; how acceptable or credible is the research? The criterion of credibility (internal validity) can be met by two standards; the use of more than one research method, and the use of respondent validation. The former is discussed in section 5.5, and refers to the use of more than one method to ensure complementarity of findings. The latter refers to the findings of the research being sent to participants for their comments. This means that comments and conclusions can be supported or rejected by participants, and with that (if necessary) readjusted to best represent the nature of the concept investigated (Bryman 2008). In this research, I have used more than one method to make sure the complementarity of findings. I have additionally sent my data presentation, discussion and conclusion to several participants for their comments.

5.6.2 Transferability

In qualitative research, transferability parallels with the criterion of external validity. This criterion concerns the possibility of generalizing findings. In contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research is, however, not aiming at generalizations but thick descriptions of few cases and/or contexts (Bryman 2008). Due to the use of the qualitative approach and according to my

research questions, I am not aiming at generalizing my findings. My findings represent the reality of IE in Ghana exemplified by reported practices at upper primary levels in two selected school. The findings of this research do not represent the reality of IE practices of other schools in the country. However, the findings may give an indication of what the reality is. Essential here is the level of possibility to transfer the findings of the two schools to other schools. For the possibility of transferability, the descriptions of the practices at the two schools need to be as thick and accurate as possible (Bryman 2008).

5.6.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the level to which a research is reliable. For a qualitative research to be reliable, complete records of the research data and process must be kept available to others; all interviews, observations and interview guides, names of the participants, and given sufficient information on the research methods used. With these records, there should be a possibility of other researchers to conduct the same research by using the exact same methods and participants. The keeping of such records further gives the opportunity for another person to check whether your data is sufficient and whether your interpretations and conclusions are convergent with your data or not (Bryman 2008). For this research it implies that all methods used for the research is mentioned, that the data presented are accurate to the information gathered, and that conclusions are drawn on the basis of that data.

5.6.4 Confirmability

This is the research criterion of objectivity. Objectivity is said to be weak in qualitative research. It can be argued that full objectivity is not possible when researching social phenomena. However, as a researcher using the qualitative approach, it is important that one's own values, thoughts and assumptions do not interfere with the presentation and analysis of the data collected. It is important that it is the voice of the participants that is represented in the discussions and conclusions (Brock-Utne 1996, Bryman 2008). As mentioned earlier, sending my thesis to the participants before final submission can ensure greater objectivity and the avoidance of wrong interpretations of their thoughts and actions.

5.7 The role of the researcher

As a researcher one can use an etic or an emic approach to the field of investigation. With an etic approach the researchers' analytical perspectives are the ones representing the field; an outsiders' perception and classification of a culture is the one that is accounted for. With an emic approach, on the other hand, the perspectives – the perceptions and categories - of the people in the culture under investigation are the ones that are taken into account (Patton 2002). In my research I was both an insider and an outsider; an insider in terms of living with a Ghanaian family while in Ghana, and with that immersing myself in their daily lives and activities, and by interviewing Ghanaian people on their understandings of the topic under investigation. An outsider in terms of not being Ghanaian myself, never having attended a primary school in Ghana as a pupil or as a teacher, and by the use of non-participant observations as the prime source of data collection to investigate and compare the differences and/or similarities of a specific topic from two different cases.

5.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations in social research primarily entail the notions of informed consent and confidentiality. Informed consent entails the researcher to give accurate information about the aims of the research to the participants (Bryman2008, Patton 2002). In this research, I informed the participants about the topic and purpose, and why I was interested in interviewing them. Further, I asked all participants whether I could interview them or not, and whether the interviews could be recorded or not. Confidentiality, on the other hand, has to do with level of anonymity (Bryman 2008, Patton 2002). In this regard, names and locations of the schools, teachers and other participants are not published. This is especially important with regards to the schools and teachers, so that teachers' classroom practices and personal expressions and experiences of and towards inclusive education cannot be tracked. From Ghana MoE I further received a letter of authorization, allowing me to conduct observations and interviewing teachers at the two selected schools.

6 Data presentation

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the access and quality dimensions of inclusive education (IE) in Ghana, exemplified with a comparison of implementation in two selected primary schools in the Greater Accra Region. In this chapter I will present the data I have gathered through the use of the aforementioned methods. Data was gathered for the purpose of answering the three research questions; 1: *To what extent and in what ways has the principle of inclusive education been adopted in the Ghanaian context?* 2: *How has inclusive education been implemented and how do different approaches compare?* and 3: *How can quality inclusive education contribute to improved learning in the Ghanaian environment and what are the challenges?* It was stated in chapter three that IE can be assessed from three levels of involvement; the government level with national policies and guidelines, the college and university level with teacher training and preparation, and the school and classroom level with practical implementation. Before presenting the data from the two selected schools, I will first present the data from the government level and the college and university level respectively.

6.1 National policies and guidelines

To get an understanding of how national policies and guidelines account for IE, I have analyzed national policy documents such as the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) for 2010-2020. I have additionally interviewed different people working in the Ministry of Education (MoE), both within the Basic Education Division (BED) and the Special Education Division (SED). In this section, I will present the outcomes of the document analysis and interviews conducted.

6.1.1 Educational access and quality

The overall goals of the ESP 2010-2020 are that all children should be able to access and participate in a child-friendly basic education of good quality. Further, one of the main guiding principles is to eliminate disparities and exclusion in mainstream education wherever possible. To achieve these goals it states that public basic education must be made available, free of cost, high of quality and non-discriminatory towards disabled or disadvantaged children (MoE 2011A, MoE 2011B). In Ghana, there are three approaches to education; special, mainstream and inclusive education.

6.1.2 Special, mainstream and inclusive education in Ghana

Educational provision for children with disabilities and other disadvantages have (internationally) existed in three forms; educational segregation, educational integration and educational inclusion (Ferguson 2008, Sebba & Ainscow 1996). In this section I will present the different educational approaches existing in Ghana.

“We have two types (note: of schools for disabled children). We have the type which is only for the disabled (...), we call them special schools. And then we have the inclusive type, where those with minor disabilities (...) are there with normal students (note: inclusive schools)” (Director of Basic Education, BED 2011-09-20).

In the ESP 2010-2020, special education is given individual focus as an educational approach separated from mainstream basic education. Inclusive education, on the other hand, is given individual focus as an educational approach that applies for some selected mainstream schools. The overall goals of inclusive and special education is to provide educational opportunities for children with mental and/or physical impairments, orphans, and fast and slow learners by “including them, wherever possible, within the mainstream formal system or, only when considered necessary, within special units or schools” (MoE 2011B, 32). This means that, as far as possible, children with any of these mentioned disabilities or difficulties should be included in inclusive education rather than special schools.

The ESP 2010-2020 gives the indication that the line between belonging in an inclusive school rather than a special school depends on whether the child’s disability or special educational need is ‘severe’ or ‘non-severe’. To find out whether a child should be included in a special school or not – to find out how severe the disability or special educational need is – it is further mentioned that identification and assessment of children’s abilities and needs is necessary. According to the resource teacher (2011-10-24) at the inclusive school, such assessment centers exist, among others, within health care institutions and the assessment is conducted by health professionals. Based on the outcomes of the assessment, conducted by the district assessment centers, the school placement of the child will be concluded (MoE 2011A, MoE 2011B).

Special education

In Ghana, special education refers to educational institutions that are separated from the mainstream (regular) institutions, and accommodates children with severe mental and/or physical

impairments, orphans, and fast and slow learners (MoE 2011B). According to a coordinator of special education,

“the special schools are segregated schools. They are basically schools for the blind, schools for the hearing impaired and schools for the intellectually disabled children. They enroll basically children with disabilities and they are far off from town” (Coordinator of Special Education, SED 2011-09-20).

The special schools normally follow the same structure as boarding schools; the children stay and live at the school at all hours of the day, including weekends. During vacations, however, the schools allow the children to go home to reunite with families and friends. To prevent social exclusion of these children, the special schools are expected to create opportunities for their pupils to interact with and participate in activities with peers at the mainstream schools (Ghana Education Service (GES) 2004). To foster socialization, it is further emphasized that special schools should be located close to mainstream schools (MoE 2011B). This implies future relocation of these schools.

Mainstream education

Mainstream education, in Ghana, refers to regular education where all ‘normal’ children receive their education. The strategic goal of mainstream basic education in Ghana is to “provide equitable access to good-quality, child-friendly universal basic education, by improving opportunities for all children” (MoE 2011B, 6). Children with disadvantages such as gender, socio-economic background or geographical placement, are expected to be included within the objectives and aims of the mainstream education (MoE 2011B). Even though the goals point in the direction of participation of all pupils, there is special attention given to these disadvantaged groups over other disadvantaged groups. With regards to access to mainstream schools, a tutor at Accra Teacher Training College (TTC) puts it this way:

“You know, we have what we call the low achievers or the high achievers, ok, and we have those who fall in between. But normally in our system we are not able to separate them, unless a child has a disability, where the child would have to go to a school which is solely for those who are disabled, either the deaf or the blind. (...). That aside, we normally combine all the students in one class (Tutor, Accra TTC 2011-09-20).

There is no attention given to differentiation or adaptation of teaching and learning strategies, even though much focus given to improvement of educational quality. The only focus given to

ensure quality education is the presence of general teaching and learning materials that can help pupils acquire the skills emphasized in the curriculum (MoE 2011A, MoE 2011B).

Inclusive education

In Ghana, IE refers to an approach that is to be used in mainstream schools to ensure the inclusion of children with non-severe mental and/or physical impairments, orphans, and fast and slow learners (MoE 2011B). To date, only some selected schools in Ghana are targeted with the inclusive approach, and to distinguish these schools from mainstream schools that are not targeting IE they are called ‘the inclusive schools’ (Coordinator of Special Education, SED 2011-10-06).

How IE developed in Ghana is discussed below. It appears that the practice of IE is not the result of local initiative but the adoption of international principles.

Development of inclusive education

The development of IE in Ghana has mainly been led by the Salamanca statement. Additionally, it is linked to the obligation to meet the goals of EFA (Coordinator of Special Education, SED 2011-10-06). These two international initiatives can be met by adopting the IE approach; by including those with disabilities and SEN into mainstream education, and making sure that they benefit (Coordinator of Special Education, SED 2011-10-06, Fobih 2008). By 2015 all mainstream schools are expected to have applied the inclusive approach (MoE 2011A, MoE 2011B).

Towards this, the SED has developed six models of Ghanaian initiatives in implementation of IE (SED 2011). The first model is aiming at integrating children with low vision and blindness in mainstream schools with support by an itinerant teacher. The second model is aiming at providing education for blind pupils within special schools for the deaf. When the blind pupils master acquired skills they will be admitted to mainstream schools located near the special schools.

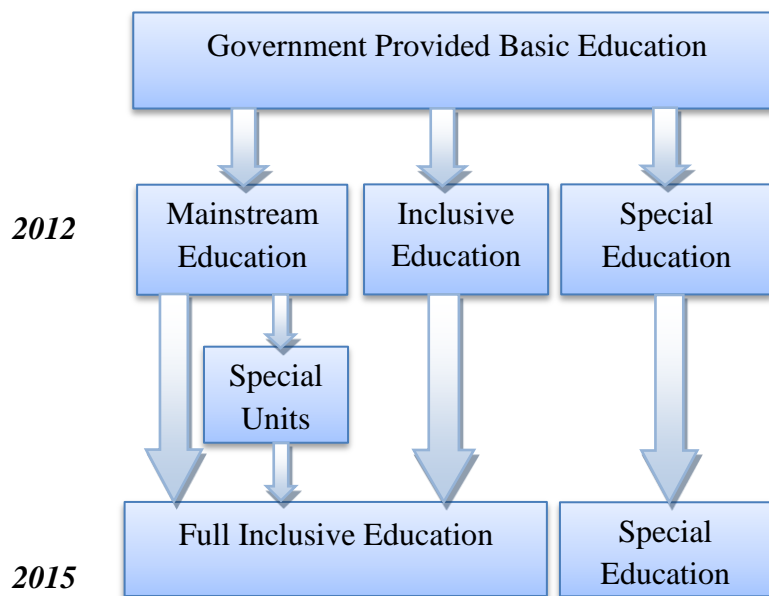
The third model aims at providing special units for the mentally disabled children within mainstream schools (SED 2011). The purpose of these units are for the pupils to receive education in mainstream classes whenever possible; the pupils will receive most of their education at the unit, but they will be integrated in mainstream classes whenever they are able to

follow the instruction given in these classes. The goal is for the children to be fully included in mainstream classes after they have achieved the required skills.

The units are located in the mainstream schools to foster physical and social integration of these children before they are fully included in mainstream classes (Special Unit Teacher 2011-10-16). Notwithstanding this ideal, pupils from the special units are not transferred to the mainstream classes. According to the teachers, the children at the unit are not ready to participate and learn within the mainstream classrooms (Special Unit Teacher 2011-10-16). The pupils at the unit, additionally, only stayed in school from 09am to 11.30am. This is because they are special children with mental disabilities and are therefore not able to do school work for too many hours (Special Unit Teacher 2011-10-16). Moreover, children at the unit do not take their lunch breaks at the same time as the mainstream classes. This is because the children would not really benefit from it, the teacher claims. Further, the pupils were sent to the unit based on concern from the class teachers in the mainstream school that had earlier accommodated the children (Special Unit Teacher 2011-10-16). The given situation raises concerns about how effective the units are, if children in the units will ever be ready to transfer to the mainstream classes. This raises questions about the legitimacy of these units.

The fourth and the fifth models aim at providing inclusive schools – mainstream schools with the inclusive approach - respectively with and without resource teacher support. Schools within these two models focus on the quality of teaching and learning for all pupils, and especially those with learning difficulties. This implies making strategies for intervention. The sixth model is aiming at providing hostels for pupils with low vision and blindness that live far away. In this hostel, the pupils are taught essential skills before they are transferred to mainstream schools (SED 2011).

However, according to the Coordinator of Special Education (2011-10-06), only models four and five are implementing full inclusion. The other models are efforts aiming at full inclusion of mainstream schools by 2015. According to a document written about IE in Ghana for the 48th session of the International Conference on Education held in Geneva in 2008 under the title Inclusive Education: the Way of the Future, the aim of the other models is to ensure social participation of the children targeted. This document was written by Fobih (2008), who at the time of the conference was the Minister of Education, Science and Sports and Chairman of the Ghana National Commission for UNESCO (Fobih 2008). The development of IE in Ghana from 2012-2015 is illustrated on the following page:



Model 6.1: The development of IE in Ghana

Access to inclusive education

According to the ESP 2010-2020, IE aims at including children with non-severe mental and/or physical disabilities, orphans, and fast and slow learners into the mainstream basic education system (MoE 2011A, MoE 2011B). However, a coordinator in special education at the SED puts it this way:

“Inclusive education tries to involve all children, those who are considered normal and those who are considered having a disability of one form or another, into one, into the mainstream system” (Coordinator of Special Education, SED 2011-10-06)

A Coordinator of special education at SED (2011-10-06) adds that IE focus on children who are marginalized and children who have special educational needs (SEN). A professor in Special Education at the University of Education Winneba (UEW) (2011-11-03) says that:

“on a larger note we are seeing that inclusive education has to do with all categories of children, whether disabled or non-disabled, which you group together like you and I and everybody else in this room; we should all be under the same roof to study”.

The professor mentions that this specifically includes pupils with hearing and visual impairments, and moderate mental disabilities. This is supported by the coordinator of special education at SED (2011-10-06), saying that IE is especially focusing on those with low vision, the blind, the hearing impaired and those with moderate mental disabilities. The coordinator (2011-10-06) further mentions that IE in Ghana tries to focus on children who have not had access to either mainstream or special schools; children who are not ‘normal’ yet not severely or visibly disabled. These children are often left in limbo; left in between mainstream and special provision (Coordinator of Special Education, SED 2011-10-06).

One can here see that there is a clear focus on children with specific disabilities. However, there is an additional focus on all children; those who are disabled, disadvantaged or marginalized for any reason. It also shows that this broader focus is adopted among participants and not the ESP 2010-2020 – it is adopted among professionals but not in policy documents on basic education.

To meet the goal of giving access to disabled, disadvantaged and marginalized children in mainstream schools, there is a need for the minds of other children, parents, communities and teachers to change so that there will be no discrimination and labeling of these children. Children (mainly the disabled) are often stigmatized, and that due to the stigmatization, some teachers, parents and pupils do not want to have them included in mainstream classrooms (Professor in Special Education, UEW 2011-11-03). There is a consensus among all the participants that these children are normally not respected in Ghana. They are often viewed as liabilities, and not able to make societal contributions.

Quality of inclusive education

Another principle of IE is the principle of quality. Inclusive education should additionally aim at giving children the opportunity to learn and participate socially and mentally within the mainstream classroom. This implies the provision and use of teaching and learning materials that can support children’s learning. In Ghana, the ESP 2010-2020 generally focuses on the improvement of quality of education. This quality improvement is linked to pupils’ learning outcomes, and can be accomplished by the use of appropriate teaching and learning materials. However, there is no attention given to how these materials can be used to support children’s learning – there is no attention given to how quality can be improved (MoESS 2011A, MoESS 2011B). According to Fobih (2008), IE shall respond to the broad spectrum of learners’ needs (Fobih 2008). The resource teacher at the inclusive school adds that:

“It (note: inclusive education) is a process. It is not a single event; it is a process of educating children with special needs or disabilities in regular schools, where they are provided with support services (...and) assistive devices (...) so that the child can be able to participate fully in the regular school” (Resource Teacher, Inclusive School 2011-10-24).

For all children to be able to learn within the mainstream classroom, the teacher needs to make special provisions for those who need it. “ A class teacher or a resource teacher (...) should take care of each category of problem because education is for all and every child has to learn” (Professor in Special Education, UEW 2011-11-03). When including all children in the mainstream classroom “they can all benefit from each other. (...); children who play together learn together” (coordinator in special education, SED 2011-10-06). However, none of the participants mention how learning and participation can take place – how quality is to be implemented in classrooms.

In Ghana there is the recognition that, the inclusive approach implies infrastructure and teacher quality to be improved, and teaching materials ought to be provided to the individual child, so that the child is able to access and learn in the mainstream system (MoE 2011A, MoE 2011B). One can clearly see that IE is not solely about access to mainstream classrooms; it is also about learning and participation in mainstream classrooms (MoE 2011A, MoE 2011B). However, as mentioned earlier, neither among education professionals nor in policy documents are there indications given as to how learning and participation can take place.

Summary

In terms of access to IE, it can be argued that there seems to be a gap between what participants say and policy documents state. According to participants, IE focuses on including all children in mainstream schools; those who are ‘normal’ as well as those who are disabled, disadvantaged, marginalized. However, when explicitly mentioning the different categories of disabled or marginalized children, they tend to emphasize children with visual and hearing impairments and mental disabilities. With regards to their use of the term special educational needs, it may further seem that the term is used as an overall category of all children experiencing a learning difficulty. For example, the resource teacher at the inclusive school describes special needs as:

“a very broad term. It includes children with disabilities and children with other peculiar problems; (...) the intellectually handicapped, the visually impaired, the hearing

impaired, the physically disabled, the communication disorders, the autistic child, (...), the gifted, (and) the talented. They are all part of the special needs” (Resource Teacher, Inclusive School 2011-10-24).

Policy documents, represented by the ESP 2010-2020 and the SED blueprint for implementing document IE, focus on specific categories of children. The ESP 2010-2020 focuses on children with non-severe mental and/or physical impairments, orphans, and fast and slow learners. The SED blueprint, on the other hand, focuses on visually impaired, hearing impaired and mentally disabled children. Going by these policy documents and participants’ specific focus on those with visual/ hearing impairments and mental disabilities, it seems that there is no space in the Ghanaian context to focus on all the other categories of children. It appears that people use the term *special educational needs* as a catch-all category of children, whether disadvantaged or marginalized for different reasons. One can conclude that there is a universal focus on three categories of children; the visually impaired, the hearing impaired, and the mentally disabled. These are the same categories of children as those given attention in special schools.

On the other hand, there seems to be more unity among participants and policy documents in terms of quality IE. They all mention that quality education should be provided to all; education should also focus on children’s learning and participation. This focus is given both to special, mainstream and inclusive education. However, there are no guidelines with regards to how this quality education – learning and participation – can be achieved. In policy documents, it is also stated that quality of education needs to improve. In addition, attention is given to the provision of well-trained teachers, and teaching and learning materials. How quality can practically be achieved is not mentioned.

6.1.3 The basic school curriculum

In Ghana, different factors are identified as barriers to some children’s access to and learning in school. In addition to poverty, disability, health issues and school organization, as mentioned in chapter four, the Director of Basic Education (2011-09-20) adds three other factors that constitute major impacts on children’s school attendance and learning; attitudes of parents and teachers, level of teachers’ absenteeism, and the work of the teacher. The latter has a special impact on children’s interest in school. In this regard, the director says that:

“you have some slow learners, and these slow learners need to be supported. But if you have a teacher who is not very committed in using child-friendly, activity-based learning

approaches some of these children will just drop out”(Director of Basic Education, BED 2011-09-20).

For successful implementation of quality IE, it is therefore important that teachers are well-trained and well-committed in their pedagogical work in school. Therefore, it is worth examining the aims and teaching strategies of the basic school curriculum, represented through the basic school syllabuses. These syllabuses are written by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MoESS, today called the Ministry of Education). All schools are to follow these syllabuses; both mainstream schools - practicing or not practicing the inclusive approach - and special schools (the Director of Basic Education, BED 2011-09-20). The aims and suggestions for teaching strategies are thus provided by the government through the syllabuses, and are to be implemented by the schools.

The basic school syllabuses that are to be presented and discussed in the following two sub-sections are those for the subjects of citizenship education, mathematics, and integrated science. These are among the syllabuses I was able to get hold of while in Ghana, and they represent some of the subjects in which I conducted my observations.

Aims of the basic school syllabuses

In the ESP 2010-2020, different educational objectives are presented. As regards the basic school curriculum, it charges the curriculum to be relevant both for personal and national development. It further provides for the teaching of societal issues such as health, gender, human rights and environments. This is necessary to expand children’s possibilities and to enhance their future opportunities, and ability to contribute to national development (MoE 2011A, MoE 2011B).

The syllabus for citizenship education expects pupils to; “build attitudes and values needed to solve personal and societal problems; develop critical thinking skills; develop a sense of national consciousness, unity and development; (...) develop an appreciation for peace and always work towards it” (MoESS 2007A:ii). Further, pupils should not only be taught different concepts, they should also be able to apply the concepts in their daily lives both in and out of school (MoESS 2007A).

In mathematics, the syllabus not only emphasizes the learning of mathematical concepts, such as space, quantity, generalization and classification (MoESS 2007B), it additionally emphasizes that pupils are to “develop the habits of diligence, perseverance, confidence and precision as a result of their mathematical training” (MoESS 2007B:ii).

Finally, in the syllabus for integrated science, different skills and abilities are mentioned. Here, critical thinking is again brought to attention. Further, emphasize is put on the development of creativity and curiosity. These three skills are pointed out as necessary for the ability to understand the environment, live a healthy quality life, and to use the concepts and ideas of science to explain the lives and world around us. Additionally, it points out the development of humane and responsible attitudes that must be applied in our treatment of the Earth - its natural resources and all living things (MoESS 2007C).

Through these syllabuses one can see a link to the general objectives of education in Ghana, as presented in section 4.3. These objectives are linked to the development of manpower for national social and economic growth. In this regard, emphasize is put on emotional, intellectual, spiritual and physical development of all individuals (Akyeampong 2010, GES 2004). For example, through the syllabuses it is emphasized that children are to develop critical thinking skills, an understanding of their environment, and the ability to apply concepts to daily life situations. With these aims, children may develop the skills to analyze and find possible, economic and workable solutions to problems concerning social and economic development of the nation as well as the individual.

To meet these aims, the basic school syllabuses give guidelines to teachers as to how they can structure their classes; it gives guidelines on teaching strategies or pedagogical interventions that classroom teachers can use to meet the presented aims (MoESS 2007A, MoESS 2007B, MoESS 2007C).

Teaching strategies presented in the syllabuses

When all basic schools are to apply the same basic school curriculum and syllabuses, and when working towards IE, it is important for the teachers to be able to make provisions for all pupils based on the aims and goals presented in the syllabuses. It is important for teachers to adapt teaching strategies that enables all pupils to learn (Tutor, Accra TTC 2011-10-07). In this regard, a professor in educational planning at UCC (2011-09-23) holds the view that:

“the goal or the mission of the school goes beyond intellectual development. People must be helped to develop holistically, and then their capabilities must be identified. (...). There are some students who by virtue of their interest and potentials will not do well when it comes to intellectual activities, but are very good in sports” (Professor in Educational Planning, UCC 2011-09-23).

The citizenship education syllabus provides some direction to teachers on how to achieve the aims of that subject. Teachers must provide classroom activities that enable pupils to internalize. In this regard, teachers should bring the concepts closer to the practical field and let pupils come up with practical solutions to the issue at hand. Further, teachers should emphasize participatory teaching and learning activities in class, with the use of role-plays, brainstorming, discussions and debates. These activities are suggested to be practiced within each topic. In the practicing of the first session of the first year (at primary four), it is further suggested for the teacher to take time to identify pupils with SEN. This identification is suggested to take place while pupils work in pairs where they discuss their weaknesses and strengths in class. Additionally, it is mentioned that the teachers should help and guide or counsel all pupils when necessary (MoESS 2007A).

In mathematics, the syllabus emphasizes pupil-centered learning. It is mentioned that pupils will achieve maximum learning through their own participation and activities (MoESS 2007B).

“There are times when the teacher must show, demonstrate, and explain. But the major part of a pupil's learning experience should consist of opportunities to explore various mathematical situations in their environment to enable them make their own observations and discoveries and record them” (MoESS 2007B:8). Here, teachers are referred to as guides rather than information transmitters in pupils’ learning, and they are suggested to use participatory teaching and learning activities rather than rote learning and drill-oriented methods (memorization). Participatory teaching and learning activities are mostly referred to as group, pair or individual work based on problem-solving with teachers’ guidance or assistance. To encourage pupils to use and develop analytical thinking and problem-solving skills, each lesson is suggested to begin with an example of a practical problem. Further, the syllabus mentions that pupils’ questions are equally important as teachers’ questions (MoESS 2007B).

The teaching strategies suggested to meet the aims of integrated science are exactly the same as those stated in the syllabus for mathematics. Additionally, it mentions content or topic specific activities such as nature walks to collect and observe natural resources; creative modeling, designing or construction of toys, tools etc. with the use of different materials; demonstration of effects of concepts. These activities are suggested to take place during project work (MoESS 2007C).

The two latter syllabuses, directs the teacher to realize that there are pupils in class who have different learning or physical abilities, and that teachers need to be aware of these differences in order to give every pupil equal attention and an equal opportunity to learn (MoESS 2007B,

MoESS 2007C). In contrast to the citizenship education syllabus, these syllabuses do not give suggestions to how teachers can identify these pupils.

Through these syllabuses one can see that different strategies are pointed out as possible ways of teaching. These strategies are, among others, group work, discussions, field trips, and role-plays. The syllabuses further point out that equal attention should be given to the pupils. That way, all pupils will have the equal opportunity to learn. Since schools targeted with IE are to include a larger category of children with disabilities or disadvantages, it is expected that inclusive schools will differentiate and adapt instruction to a greater extent than mainstream schools. In other words, it is expected that inclusive schools have more pupils with (visible and/or recognized) disabilities and disadvantages, and it is therefore expected that they will adapt different teaching strategies and give individual attention to a greater extent than mainstream schools.

6.2 Teacher training and preparation

Another level that can impact IE practices in schools and classrooms is that of teacher training. In Ghana, there are different TTC and university programs that focus on issues in mainstream education (including the notion of IE) and in special education. According to Fobih (2008), “the teacher training curriculum has also been enriched and expanded to cater for the needs of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and those with Special Educational Needs (SENs)” (Fobih 2008:1). To assess to what extent IE is accounted for at teacher training level, I have analyzed the TTC curriculum, and conducted interviews with a professor in SEN at UEW and a tutor at Accra TTC.

The TTC practice a so-called in-in-out-program. This is practiced to improve the overall qualifications of future teachers. During the first two years of this program, the teacher students are on campus for formal training in basic school subjects and teaching methods. In the third year, on the other hand, they are sent to different basic schools throughout the country to practice teaching under the supervision of a certified classroom teacher (Tutor, Accra TTC 2011-09-20).

6.2.1 Inclusive education in Teacher Training Colleges

In the curriculum for the TTCs, IE is given special attention. This is done during the second year of training. This year consists of two semesters where courses related to IE issues are taught; *Principles and Methods of Teaching in Basic Schools*, and *Educating the Individual with Special Needs*. Additionally they do on-campus practical training on these issues, where they conduct

role-plays and imitations on how to teach (IoE UCC 2005, Tutor, Accra TTC 2011-09-20). The curriculum does not go deep into the aspects of the subjects, but briefly presents their content and general aims.

The course of *Principles and Methods of Teaching in Basic Schools* concerns methods of effective teaching, the design of teaching plans, and the use of different teaching methods. It covers aspects of pupil-centered teaching, such as discovery learning, discussion, problem-solving, group work, projects, field trips and cooperative learning (IoE UCC 2005).

The course *Educating the Individual with Special Needs* focuses on the different categories of SEN, instructional strategies that can be applied to support pupils with SEN and issues of IE practices. Here, the categories of SEN children include “gifted children, mental retardation, visual impairment, auditory impairment, physical disorders and behavior disorders” (IoE UCC 2005:12). Further, there is attention given to the causes of these SEN (genetic and pre-natal causes, and environmental factors), the forms of learning disabilities they may impose on the children, and that teachers must identify children with SEN in the classroom (IoE UCC 2005). However, specific information or examples of the different causes, their impact on children’s learning, and how the teacher can identify these children is not given.

Additionally, a course called *Child and Adolescent Development and Learning* is given during the first in-year. Through this course teacher students are introduced to the different stages of child development, the processes of children’s learning and their implications on teaching strategies. Here, issues of children’s cognitive, physical, moral, psychosocial and language development are brought to attention through the writings of, among others, Piaget. Further, the implication these issues have on teaching and learning is presented through, among others, the constructivist theory (IoE UCC 2005). This course thus introduces the teacher students to philosophical assumptions underlying different teaching practices.

In the TTC curriculum it is, however, not mentioned to what extent the different courses are taught, what aspect(s) of a topic are given attention, or what topic(s) are given most attention. Neither are examples of practical implementation given, nor the specific link between the different theories and their implications for classroom pedagogy. However, they give an impression of where the focus lies; what issues are raised and what issues are ignored. In this regard, it can be summarized that TTCs give attention to IE, SEN, and the use of different teaching strategies (differentiation). However, whether there is a link, and how strong the possible link is between IE, SEN and the teaching strategies is not clear. Compared to the ESP

2010-2020 and the SED blueprint – the focus on categories of SEN at the TTC is quite broad. However, it is not clear in the TTC curriculum as to what categories of SEN children are to be included in mainstream or inclusive schools, whether there is a distinction between the categories of SEN and mainstream or inclusive educational provision, and whether the different teaching strategies are to be used in both mainstream and inclusive schools or only at the inclusive schools.

6.3 School and classroom implementation

So far I have presented the issues of inclusive education raised at both government and teacher training levels. These issues concerned both the access to and quality of IE; what children are accounted for in terms of receiving education in mainstream or inclusive schools, and how the two schools should accommodate these children in terms of teaching and learning. In the following section I will present the practical field of IE – the core level of IE. I will also compare the practices observed at the two schools. For the purpose of comparing, I have used the exact same methods and the same research time to gather data that is comparable. Here, I have used semi-structured observations of classroom practices, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews with teachers.

School and classroom observations

To assess classroom implementation of IE, I used an observation guide (see table 6.1 and 6.2). This observation guide consisted of thirteen objectives that were developed on the basis of international literature on IE and instructional differentiation; the objectives are related to IE pedagogy and teacher roles, such as group work, guidance and individual help, the use of teaching and learning materials etc. The objectives were additionally guided by the basic school syllabuses, so that I would have a smaller chance of producing objectives the teachers themselves would not have been introduced to.

The objectives of the observation guide were answered with the alternatives of ‘not practiced’, ‘rarely practiced’ and ‘often practiced’ in each observed lesson. In this regard, ‘not practiced’ refers to never being observed during the lesson, ‘rarely practiced’ refers to having been observed one time during the lesson, and ‘often practiced’ refers to having been observed more than one time during the lesson. The outcomes of the observation guide at the two schools are presented in tables 6.1 and 6.2. These outcomes come from a total of five completed lessons from each school. The numbers in the tables therefore represent how many of the five lessons

scored ‘not practiced’, ‘rarely practiced’ and ‘often practiced’ on each of the objectives.

Additional to the observation guide, I produced detailed notes on how every observed class was carried out.

Despite my total stay of six days at each school, I was only able to record five complete lessons from each school, ranging from 40 minutes to one hour and 40 minutes per lesson. This was due to many interruptions during the school day, which led many lessons not being fully carried out. These interruptions came from, among others, teacher absenteeism due to phone calls, late arrivals or school duties such as meetings with the head teacher or other teachers, worshipping of God, and pupils practicing for an inter-school sports competition. At the inclusive school, there was additionally a flood that caused teachers to be confused for some hours about whether they should teach or not, even though most teachers and pupils were already in school. The many uncompleted observations are not included in the following presentation on the formal classroom practices. This is because a presentation and analysis of uncompleted lessons may not give a correct view on how lessons are fully carried through. However, some of the practices I observed during these classes will be presented under the sections called informal classroom practices – the hidden curriculum. Also, as far as I was able to observe the uncompleted lessons, it is clear that they support the outcomes of the observations from the completed lessons. This is in terms of the presentation and structure of the instruction, and how the teachers approached their pupils.

In the following two sections, I will present the practices of IE at the two schools. First, I will present how the schools work with IE access. Thereafter, I will present formal classroom practices supported by the use of the observation guide. Also, I will present informal classroom practices. These classroom practices are not directly linked to the teaching of the specific subjects; they are classroom practices that are linked to informal conversations, how the teachers respond to pupils’ answers, actions and questions, and how they talk about disabilities in class. Finally, I will mention other school issues that may affect teachers’ work towards IE. These issues concern teaching and learning materials, and the use of the basic school syllabuses.

6.3.1 The mainstream school

The observations conducted at this school were in classes of English language, integrated science, mathematics, religious and moral education, and citizenship education. The language of instruction was English, and classes were from 08.00am-12.00pm, with additional classes from 07.00-08.00am. The teachers were both male and female middle-aged teachers. All had certificates and diplomas from different TTCs, among two of them within the last few years. At

the school I had one focus group interview and informal conversations with teachers from whose classes I observed. The focus group interview was conducted after school hours and was short because the teachers were eager to go home. This left me with limited information about their work towards IE. However, I got additional information during informal conversations.

Access

According to the ESP 2010-2020, as a mainstream school this school is expected to include children who are disadvantaged due to factors like gender, socio-economic background and geographical placement. The teachers did not mention to what extent children in their school are disadvantaged due to these reasons. And no children with visible disabilities or disadvantages were observed. However, according to the head teacher, having school classes from 08am to 12pm is a factor that ensures greater attendance among some disadvantaged children. This is especially the case with children who come from families of traders where the child is expected to contribute to the family income by working in the market (Head Teacher 2011-10-09). The class teachers additionally mentioned that they do have children who are so-called slow learners. Teachers did not give answers as to why these children were slow learners and they did not give answers to what type of slow learner these children were. However, it can be assumed that some of the children may experience learning difficulties due to their socio-economic background; due to family obligations in terms of contributing with family income. When expected to work in the market every afternoon, there is not much time left for home work. This is confirmed by the class teachers. They said that their pupils often come to school with unfinished home work because they work in the evenings.

Formal classroom practices

According to observations (see table 6.1), there was an average over-representation of ‘not practiced’ in all the five completed lessons. ‘Rarely practiced’ mainly appeared on objectives number four, seven and nine. This is because teachers rarely (note: once) used readings (objective four) and individual work (objective seven), and made sure that pupils understood the topic either by letting them ask questions or by themselves asking questions such as *Do you get it?* or *Is it right?* (objective nine). ‘Often practiced’ only appeared on an average at the first objective; the teachers gave many examples when explaining the topics and concepts. These observations are presented in table 6.1:

Table 6.1: Outcomes of the observation guide in the mainstream school

Objectives:	‘Not practiced’	‘Rarely practiced’	‘Often practiced’
1.Examples are given when the teacher is explaining a case or a topic	1	0	4
2. The teacher uses multimedia (i.e. newspapers, radio, TV) or ICT in teaching	5	0	0
3. The teacher asks questions that require pupils to use critical and/or creative thinking	3	1	1
4. Various instructional strategies are used (i.e. readings, lectures, role plays etc.)	2	3	0
5. The teacher gives help to individual pupils who need it	4	1	0
6. The teacher uses resources (i.e. pictures, building blocks etc.) while teaching	3	1	1
7. Pupils are working in groups, in pair or individually on topics/projects	1	4	0
8. The teacher gives examples of how the topic can be applied in real life situations	3	1	1
9. The teacher makes sure that all pupils understand the topic (i.e. by asking questions after or during the lecture, or by letting pupils ask questions and make sure an answer is given)	2	2	1
10. In group, pair or individual work, the pupils can choose the topic in which they are interested	5	0	0
11. The pupils have resources which can help them learn the topic (i.e. calculator, a ruler etc.)	3	1	1
12. The teacher sets different goals for the pupils according to their previous knowledge and abilities	5	0	0
13. Before continuing to a next topic/case, the teacher makes sure that all pupils have finished assignments to the previous topic	3	1	1

Additional to these average scores, some exceptions occurred. In two classes (integrated science and citizenship education), objectives number six and eleven were ‘rarely practiced’ and ‘often practiced’; resources were used both when the topics were explained (objective six) and when

pupils were to do assignments (objective eleven). In integrated science, the teacher once made a colorful drawing on the board to explain parts of the topic (a pie to illustrate the composition of the elements in air), and the pupils once used a compass to perform an assignment (copying the pie). In citizenship education, on the other hand, the teacher used more than one resource more than once (bath sponge, soap, towel, hair brush etc.). This was used both when explaining the topic (personal hygiene) and when asking pupils questions such as *What is the bath sponge used for?* and *Where is it necessary to use the towel?* In these two subjects, objective number eight was additionally rarely and often practiced; in integrated science the teacher let the pupils run across the football field as part of explaining how energy and air is affected by physical activity, while in citizenship education examples of how to maintain personal hygiene were often given in addition to demonstrations of how the resources (towel, soap etc.) are to be used. In citizenship education and religious and moral education, the teachers asked questions that required pupils to think creatively and/or critically, as represented in objective three. This was respectively practiced rarely and often, with questions such as *Who created God?*, *What is commitment?* and *What is personal hygiene?*

Based on the notes on how the classes were carried out it can be reported that all classes consisted of the same structure; the teacher shortly presented the topic by writing it down on the board, thereafter he or she presented and explained essential concept(s), gave examples and asked pupils questions. Pupils were then given written assignments. These assignments normally consisted of questions the teachers wrote on the board, and they concerned the presented topic and were to be handed in at the end of the lesson. Finally, the lessons ended with the teacher collecting and checking pupils' answers to the assignments given. While following this structure, only a few teachers were attentive to pupils' responses and none used child-centered teaching approaches.

Yet, in the focus group interview (2011-10-12) the teachers said that lessons need to be carried out in different ways due to children's different needs. One teacher said that the methods need to benefit the child because some children learn better when pictures are used or when they listen to teachers talk (Teacher One). The teacher added that "(...) the variety in methods would help each and every child in a different way" (Teacher One).

However, the teachers expressed having difficulties implementing such variety of methods in class, and giving pupils (who need it) extra attention.

“It is a bit difficult, we try but it is a bit difficult because of the number (note: number of pupils)” (Teacher One), “and the little time...” (Teacher Two),

“and the time, we don’t have time. The time is not enough for you to concentrate on the slow ones, but we try as teachers to help them. (...). ...you have to give special attention to that child so that she can catch up” (Teacher One),

“and by including (note: slow learners), those who are able to (note: fast learners) are driven a little bit back, because you have to pay attention to those who have special needs. (...). So there is less attention to those who are...” (Teacher Two),

“...just like there are slow ones, there are exceptionally good ones too. So when you are paying attention to the slow ones, the exceptionally good ones too tends to be frustrated” (Teacher Three), “aha, then you draw them back” (Teacher Two), “you draw them back” (Teacher One).

The teachers further told me that the lack of resources such as books, pictures and multimedia is a problem for their classroom teaching. Without such resources, they are not able to implement the lessons in different ways, as expressed above. This concern was expressed during informal conversations. On a question in the focus group interview on what learning difficulties the pupils in their class express, one teacher responded:

“Some are a bit slow. (...). Sometimes in our classes, last year for instance I had a girl who (...) was visually challenged. She was in the class. And sometimes we have hearing, some have hearing disabilities and things like that. But they, we teach all of them together so that they interact with the other children” (Teacher One).

On questions concerning what methods they could use for the teaching of children with learning difficulties, they were not able to give concrete examples. Also, they were not able to give concrete examples of what methods they could use to the benefit of all pupils, not only for those with difficulties. However, when I directly asked whether they use group work, one of the teachers responded that in English language they use group work. This is used to let the fast readers help the slow readers (Teacher Three). In addition, one teacher commented that they sometimes group children together, but that they also have to stand in the front to instruct and ask question (Teacher One). These were the responses I had concerning the practical implementation of different instructional strategies. The rigid classroom structure observed may

be caused by these issues; little time and resources, high teacher-pupil ratio, and teachers showing little knowledge on how to use different teaching strategies.

Informal classroom practices – the hidden curriculum

Even though pupils were asked questions that would require creative and/or critical thinking, pupils' responses that were 'outside' the book were not welcomed as correct. To the question on what commitment is, for example, the teacher told the pupils that the correct answer is in the book. Because the pupils did not know the answer given in the book the pupils had to repeat the definition from the book out loud several times. This way of repeating words or sentences was frequently used in all classes, both for the learning of correct pronunciation of words and for the memorization of definitions and rules. This is in contrast to what the syllabuses say; learning is best achieved when rote-learning and drill-oriented methods (memorization) are avoided. To the question *Who created God?*, on the other hand, pupils looked confused, yet intrigued. However, the teacher did not encourage the pupils to give answers but laughed about the question and said that "it's ok. Nobody created him, he created all".

Additionally, in all of the observed classes, correct answers were responded with both the teacher and pupils clapping. Further, when teachers either asked *Is that right?* or had specific questions to the topic just presented and the pupils either didn't answer or answered wrong, teachers normally responded with *Did you not listen to me?* or *You haven't paid attention*. Further, the teacher in citizenship education said that the pupils needed to listen to her, because they themselves and their parents would not know how to practice the issue presented (personal hygiene). The teacher had to show them how it is properly practiced; the teacher had to demonstrate for the pupils to copy at home.

Other school issues

At this school, not many resources were observed to be in use. Only books provided by the government, and some children carrying other small fiction books that they had borrowed from a library outside the school area were seen. Other than these, the school did not have any teaching and learning materials available. However, they had additional classes for 30 minutes in the morning because of the short school day lasting from 08.00am to 12.00pm. Due to the same interruptions as the ones mentioned above, these extra-classes were, on the other hand, never fully carried through; both teachers and pupils were late, and teachers answered phone calls and

had conversations with other teachers. Additionally, the teachers did not know what the pupils should work with because they were not their class-teachers.

Despite the lack of resources, the school was located next to a resource center. At this resource center they make and provide extra teaching and learning materials for the teachers at the nearby schools to use. They do this because teachers have a lot to do and therefore they do not have time to make additional resources themselves; the resource center is there to help them. Further, the resource center gives extra teaching classes in reading to pupils experiencing difficulties. These classes take place after school hours and pupils have to initiate going there themselves. Due to this, very few pupils take advantage of the opportunity (Employee, Resource Center 2011-10-13).

Finally, an observation worth noting is the apparent absence of copies of syllabuses in the school. Teachers are told to use the syllabuses for the different subjects when planning their lessons. The teachers themselves confirmed this in the focus group interview. According to them, there is only one set of syllabuses at the school and when I asked to take a look at it, nobody could find it.

Summary

In the presentation of the school and classroom practices of IE at the mainstream school, a few summarizing comments can be made. In terms of access, this school shows little evidence of IE practices. They have had a few pupils with visual and hearing impairments earlier, but not at this point in time. However, as a mainstream school, it is, going by the ESP 2010-2020, not expected of them to include these categories of children. With regards to the categories of children they are required to include (as a mainstream school), there is little evidence of this inclusion also.

Formal classroom practices show little evidence of differentiating instruction. All lessons were structured the same way, and most lessons score few points on the alternatives ‘rarely practiced’ and ‘often practiced’ of the observation guide. More closely, three of the objectives were ‘never practiced’ (objectives number two, ten and twelve). A total of nine objectives were ‘rarely practiced’, and seven objectives were ‘often practiced’. Among the ‘rarely practiced’, objectives four, seven and nine were observed in more than one lesson. Among the ‘often practiced’, only objective one was observed in more than one lesson.

In terms of aspects of the hidden curriculum, it is evident that pupils’ answers to questions were not cherished unless they were repetitions of what is contained in the text book. Only the book

(or in some cases the teacher) could have the correct answer to questions. Teachers blame the pupils when they are not able to comment on the topic just presented. These observations are supported by the observations of the uncompleted classes.

With regards to the teachers' expressions on issues of IE and the use of different teaching strategies, it can be summarized that the teachers seemed to be aware that different methods and resources should be used in class for the benefit of all pupils. However, they did not know what and how the methods and resources could be used. This may imply that the teachers are not aware of what teaching strategies are presented in the basic school syllabuses, and that the syllabuses are not used for planning the lessons. It may also imply that practical implementation of IE pedagogy suffers due to lack of knowledge. It is further compounded in the difficulties they face in accommodating pupils with disabilities in class, due to high teacher-pupil ratio, few resources and little time. However, it must be mentioned that time and resources were not efficiently used.

6.3.2 The inclusive school

The observations conducted at the inclusive school were in the classes of integrated science, citizenship education, and creative arts. As in the mainstream school, the language of instruction was English. However, at this school classes lasted from 08.00am-14.30pm. The teachers were both male and female middle-aged teachers. All of them were certified teachers with some years of experience. At this school I was not able to conduct focus group interviews with the classroom teachers. Despite several attempts, most of the teachers were not willing to be interviewed. One teacher told me she was new and therefore was not comfortable talking to me about IE issues. Others gave no response on why they did not want to be interviewed. This school seems to have more pressure in terms of living up to the goals of IE because they are specifically targeted with it, and they have also told me I am not the only foreigner coming to the school. According to the teachers, previous foreign researchers had been to the school and this scrutiny may explain their reluctance to grant interviews. However, I succeeded in conducting one unrecorded conversation with one of the classroom teachers. This interview was very short and took place in class while pupils were working on an assignment. Even though the conversation was very brief and without follow-up questions, it gave me some information on how he prefers teaching and how the teaching environment affects his work. Also, one of the resource teachers provided me with a lot of useful information about issues of IE at the school.

Access

In contrast to the mainstream school, this school is expected to include children with non-severe mental and/or physical impairments, orphans, and fast and slow learners. The school has statistics on the SEN categories the school accommodates. Some of these children have been transferred to the inclusive school from different special schools (Resource Teacher 2011-10-23). The SEN of these children are identified as caused by the following factors; visually impairment (14 pupils), hearing impairment (3 pupils), intellectual handicap (2 pupils), physical disability (2 pupils), learning disability including children with dyslexia and dyscalculia (24 pupils), orphans (4 pupils), communication disorder (1 pupil), and street children (3 pupils). I have not seen the records of this. The resource teacher provided these numbers orally. For the education of these children, the school uses Individual Education Plans (IEPs). These are educational plans that give information regarding each pupil's strengths and weaknesses, and the goals and objectives for their future learning (Resource Teacher 2011-10-23). However, the school did not want to show me a copy of such an IEP, due to the personal nature of the information on pupils. Further, they did not want to show me a copy of an unwritten IEP. The reason for this was not given.

Formal classroom practices

At this school, the objectives that are 'rarely practiced' or 'often practiced' to a greater extent than 'never practiced' are objectives number one, seven and nine. Objective number one was mainly practiced by the teacher giving concrete examples of objects or things related to the topic at hand. For example, in integrated science, the teacher gave several examples during the explanation of the topic (metals). Another example is from the class of citizenship education. With the topic *Human activities that destroy the environment*, many examples of such activities were given, and how such activities can destroy the environment. As with the observations from the mainstream school, objective seven refers to teachers letting pupils work individually on assignments, and objective nine refers to teachers making sure that all pupils understand the topic either by asking the pupils questions such as *Do you understand?* or *Get it?* or by pupils asking follow-up questions on issues they did not understand (see table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Outcomes of the observation guide at the inclusive school

Objectives:	<i>'Not practiced'</i>	<i>'Rarely practiced'</i>	<i>'Often practiced'</i>
1.Examples are given when the teacher is explaining a case or a topic	1	2	2
2. The teacher uses multimedia (i.e. newspapers, radio, TV) or ICT in teaching	5	0	0
3. The teacher asks questions that require pupils to use critical and/or creative thinking	4	0	1
4. Various instructional strategies are used (i.e. readings, lectures, role plays etc.)	5	0	0
5. The teacher gives help to individual pupils who need it	4	1	0
6. The teacher uses resources (i.e. pictures, building blocks etc.) while teaching	4	1	0
7. Pupils are working in groups, in pair or individually on topics/projects	2	3	0
8. The teacher gives examples of how the topic can be applied in real life situations	5	0	0
9. The teacher makes sure that all pupils understand the topic (i.e. by asking questions after or during the lecture, or by letting pupils ask questions and make sure an answer is given)	2	1	2
10. In group, pair or individual work, the pupils can choose the topic in which they are interested	5	0	0
11. The pupils have resources which can help them learn the topic (i.e. calculator, a ruler etc.)	5	0	0
12. The teacher sets different goals for the pupils according to their previous knowledge and abilities	5	0	0

13. Before continuing to a next topic/case, the teacher makes sure that all pupils have finished assignments to the previous topic	5	0	0
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However, some exceptions occurred also at this school. In one class (citizenship education) objective number three was practiced more than once. Here, questions regarding the topic (assertiveness), such as *How do you understand assertiveness?* and *What does assertiveness imply?*, could give pupils the opportunity to use creative and/or critical thinking. Further, objective number five was only practiced once in one class (creative arts). While working on a drawing, the teacher walked around in class to give individual help to those struggling. The teacher further gave complements to those performing well. Objective number six was also practiced once in one class (citizenship education). In this class, the teacher used a big poster with a picture that explains the life cycle of mosquitoes. This was used when explaining the reproduction of mosquitoes, and the conditions under which such reproduction happen.

The classroom structure at this school is exactly same as the one observed at the mainstream school. The teacher presented the topic by writing it down on the board, presented and explained the concept(s), gave examples, asked questions and gave written assignments that were to be handed in and assessed at the end of the class.

With regards to teaching practices used at the school, the classroom teacher I was able to talk to told me that he normally prefers using group work and discussions. These are child-friendly approaches that give pupils the opportunities to participate (Teacher One 2011-10-25). The resource teacher adds that the school is interested in children's participation and contribution to national development, and that to ensure more effective learning among their pupils the teachers should emphasize problem-solving methods rather than traditional lectures (Resource Teacher, 2011-10-24). With regards to the teaching of pupils with learning disabilities, he further adds that:

“Over here we are practicing both the partial and the full inclusion. (...). The full inclusion is where the child, the special needs child stays in the regular classroom to learn throughout the day with the persons without disabilities or special needs. But the partial inclusion is where we pull the child to the resource room maybe for one hour and take him or her through areas that we think he or she is lacking” (Resource Teacher, 2011-10-24).

Informal classroom practices – the hidden curriculum

In the one class where pupils were asked questions that could require them to think creatively and/or critically, the teacher was not open to their personal responses. The teacher was aiming at answers that were correct according to the book. After reading the definition of assertiveness out loud several times, the teacher told the pupils to close their books. The teacher then again asked question like *What is assertiveness?* and *What do you understand by assertiveness?* However, when pupils answered in ways that were not in line with the definition the teacher had read out loud from the book, the pupils were asked to open the book again to look for the correct answer. As with the practices in the mainstream school, this is in contrast to what the basic school syllabuses say about the avoidance of rote-learning and drill-oriented methods (memorization). Additionally, in all classes where pupils gave answers that were correct according to the book, the pupils were clapped for. Answers that were wrong according to the book were met by responses such as *Where have you been while I was talking?* or *You haven't been listening.* The resource teacher told me that they use such clapping as a motivation factor for the pupils. In creative arts, the pupils were given an assignment that was to be individually performed. This assignment was to copy a drawing the teacher made on the board. This implies the use of imitation and little use of personal creativity.

The children with SEN I was introduced to, were firstly and mainly children with visual impairments. When after some time I asked the resource teacher in what classes pupils with other SEN were, he pointed out (on the spot) a child who is supposed to have dyslexia. He further mentioned that in the previous class I observed, there was another child with a learning difficulty. He did not tell me what learning difficulty that was. This may support the earlier discussed notion that the trend of categories of disabilities in special schools is transferred to inclusive schools, and leads IE to be inclusive mainly for a few categories of children; that is, those with visual and hearing impairments, and those with mental disabilities. When I was introduced to the classes with the visually impaired children, the resource teacher introduced me to the class by saying that I was there to observe the children with the impairment only. The children with the visual impairments were made to stand up so I could see who they were.

Other school issues

At this school, several resources were observed to be present; a library with many books, tables and chairs; posters; communication boards used for visual teaching of words to pupils with communication problems; a 'drama and art corner' used for therapy and social learning; world

maps, and globes. These have been funded by different international organizations supporting their school approach. Despite these resources, the classroom teacher told me during our conversation that he finds the school conditions not always motivating, due to the lack of resources such as books and pictures etc. according to this teacher, in the classes he teaches, there are not even textbooks for all the pupils. Also, despite having a library, the teacher told me it was too small to accommodate all the pupils in class and therefore he normally does not use it (Teacher One 2011-10-25). Further, the resource teacher said that the drama and art corner is not often used. Thus, even though the school has different resources, teachers are not using them.

I further observed the lower primary levels using group seating with about 7-8 pupils in each group. When I asked the class teacher at primary 1 why they are seated in groups, the teacher answered that because they are children, school and learning needs to be fun. With such seating they can additionally learn from each other, and it is practical when they do arts and group work (Class Teacher Primary One 2011-10-24). When I asked the resource teacher why the upper primary classes are not seated in such groups he told me that the lower classes have such seating because the children are too small for the normal desks and chairs, and that children at primary one and two learn more from playing and doing arts (Resource Teacher 2011-10-24).

Even though there are two resource teachers attached to the school, these two are also committed to work on IE issues at other schools. Due to this, they have little time to focus on the teaching of the special needs children themselves. Therefore, they train the other teachers at the school so that they will be able to manage the education of these children themselves. In addition, they collaborate with head teachers at other schools, psychologists, nurses and other health personnel at the nearby children's hospital, the special education department, and parents of children with SEN (Resource Teacher 2011-10-23).

As in the mainstream school, the teachers at this school are told to use the basic school syllabuses to plan their lessons. However, there is only one set of syllabuses at the school and when I asked to take a look at it nobody could find it.

Summary

According to the ESP 2010-2020, as a school targeting IE they are to include certain categories of disabled and disadvantaged children. In the school there were children with different disadvantages that caused learning difficulties. The school had statistics on how many children

have the different categories of disadvantages. I, however, observed only two children with visual impairments. These two children wore glasses.

The school shows little evidence on the use of different teaching strategies (see table 6.2). It is observed that seven of the thirteen objectives were ‘never practiced’ in any of the lessons. A total of five objectives were ‘rarely practiced’, and three were ‘often practiced’. Among the ‘rarely practiced’ were objectives one, five, six, seven and nine, and among the ‘often practiced’ were objectives one, three and nine.

With regards to aspects of the hidden curriculum, the observations show that only answers that were correct according to the book were applauded. By using applause as a motivation factor, it implies that pupils were given motivation only by answering according to the book. Further, when pupils were not able to answer questions regarding the topic just presented, teachers blamed the pupils for not following the instructions given.

At this school it was not possible to obtain teachers’ views on issues of IE and the use of different teaching strategies because the teachers were not willing to discuss them. However, it was observed that teachers did not use any resources when teaching despite the existence of them. The teacher interviewed expressed knowledge about different teaching strategies and the reasons for why it is important to use these strategies. However, the teacher did not practice any of the strategies in class.

6.3.3 The two schools compared

With regards to the principles of access to and quality of IE, it can be concluded that both schools seem to have a view on IE in terms of access to a greater extent than in terms of quality. In terms of educational access, the two schools are to give access to pupils with different disabilities and disadvantages. This is due to their different educational approaches; that is, mainstream or inclusive. In the ESP 2010-2020, mainstream schools are to give access to children who are disadvantaged due to factors such as gender, socio-economic background or geographical placement. Inclusive schools, on the other hand, are to give access to children with non-severe mental and/or physical disabilities, orphans, and fast and slow learners (MoE 2011A, MoE 2011B).

There is not much evidence from the mainstream school to conclude to what extent they give access to children with disadvantages due to the above mentioned factors. However, the school

had classes in the morning that benefit pupils from families of traders. I can, however, not draw conclusions on whether these pupils were slow learners due to their disadvantage (for example by not having time to do home work due to family obligations) or due to other reasons. The inclusive school, on the other hand, adopts a broad view on categories of SEN to be included in the inclusive approach. The school is observed to at least include children with visual impairments. Even though the resource teacher gave me statistical data on other categories of children the school includes, I have not seen the statistical data itself, nor have I seen children with any of the other SEN. This does not necessarily mean that the children are not there; not all children with SEN are easily identifiable during a stay of six days. In terms of access to children with identified disabilities or other disadvantages, the inclusive school can therefore be said to be more successful compared to the mainstream school. However, this may be a natural cause of the focus given on disadvantaged children to be included in the two approaches in the ESP 2010-2020. In terms of achieving what is expected from the ESP 2010-2020, it is, on the basis of my data, not possible to make valid conclusions on whether the mainstream or the inclusive school is more successful.

In terms of quality IE, on the other hand, it can be concluded that the two schools observed show little, however, noticeable differences. One can see that the mainstream school use slightly more teaching approaches that support the quality IE principle than the inclusive school (see tables 6.1 and 6.2). The schools show similarities in practices regarding objectives one, seven and nine. These objectives concern the use of examples to the topics or concepts taught, the use of individual work, and making sure that pupils understand the topic. They were equally ‘rarely practiced’ and ‘often practiced’ at both schools.

Objectives four, eight, eleven and thirteen, on the other hand, were ‘rarely practiced’ and ‘often practiced’ at the mainstream school while ‘never practiced’ at the inclusive school. These objectives concern the use of different instructional strategies, examples of real life application, the individual use of resources, and the teacher making sure that all pupils have finished an assignment before continuing to next topic. Regarding objective number four, it is, however, evident that the mainstream school only used reading. Lastly, objectives number three, five and six were only once practiced rarely or often at both schools. These concern the teacher asking questions that require creative and/or critical thinking, giving individual help to pupils, and using resources while teaching.

With regards to these observations, it is important to mention that the use of differentiated methods or strategies only occurred among objectives that have nothing or little to do with major

arrangements of the class. Additionally, the use of the methods and strategies seemed only to occur by chance; they were not characterized by structure. Rather, they were characterized by teachers' spontaneity. A conclusion pointing in the direction that the mainstream school does better than the inclusive school in terms of classroom practices is therefore not a valid conclusion. The conclusion is rather that both schools use the same classroom structure and that they seem to practice pedagogy that supports quality IE only by chance. With the inclusive school being targeted with the inclusive approach, it was expected that this school would apply pedagogy that support IE to a greater extent than the mainstream school. However, from observations one can conclude that this is not the case.

Another important distinction to make is that of the level of teacher' knowledge about teaching strategies. The teacher at the inclusive school, in addition to the resource teacher, had knowledge of which child-centered teaching strategies exist and why these strategies should be used. Despite this knowledge, action did not follow. The teachers at the mainstream school had, on the other hand, no knowledge of this. However, strong conclusions cannot be drawn on bases of interviews with only one teacher in the inclusive school. But it may give an indication as to what is the case at the school.

Important to mention here is that the interpretations from the two schools are mainly based on what is observed. Due to most teachers not wanting to talk to me, I have not been able to record their personal meanings and interpretations of IE. As mentioned in chapter five, mixed methods were to be used to gather complementary data. However, when focus group and one-to-one interviews with teachers partly failed, I was able to gather little complementary data of school and classroom practices of IE.

7 Data discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this research is to explore inclusive education (IE) in the Ghanaian context, exemplified with practices at two selected schools in the Greater Accra Region. With this in mind, the following research questions were asked; 1: *To what extent and in what ways has the principles of inclusive education been adopted in the Ghanaian context?* 2: *How has inclusive education been implemented and how do different approaches compare?* 3: *How can quality inclusive education contribute to improved learning in the Ghanaian environment and what are the challenges?*

To assess the extent and ways in which the principles of IE have been adopted in the Ghanaian context, I focused on two aspects; access and quality. In this regard, some additional questions were vital; is IE defined in terms of access or quality, or both? Does IE seem to be accounting for all pupils or for pupils with specific disabilities or disadvantages only? If so, what disabilities or disadvantages are being accounted for? And how do teacher approach their pupils in class?

Internationally, IE is defined as an approach to education that focuses on both access and quality for all children in mainstream (regular) schools. This does not only imply that all children should have physical access to mainstream classrooms, it also implies that all children should participate and learn in that classroom. Children do not only have the right to education, they also have the right in education. It further implies that no child is to be excluded for reasons based on disadvantages linked to gender, disabilities or socio-economic background (UNESCO & MoES Spain 1994). Despite international attempts for governments to provide education for all, some children continue to be marginalized, either in terms of access or in terms of quality (UNESCO 2010). National implementation of the two principles of IE depends on how IE and disadvantages are defined, what the national objectives of basic education are, and what economic and political priorities are made.

7.1 Summary of the findings

Inclusive education in the Ghanaian context makes an interesting, yet confusing case. This is mainly due to the distinction between mainstream and inclusive schools. These are both government provided mainstream (regular) schools that apply different educational approaches. Mainstream schools target educational access for all. However, with special focus on those disadvantaged due to factors such as gender, socio-economic background and geographical

placement. Inclusive schools, on the other hand, target IE principles and focus on educational access for those with disabilities and learning difficulties. In terms of quality, no specific attention is given. Quality of education is only given attention in general terms, both for mainstream and inclusive schools. It refers to improvements of pupils' learning outcomes. How these improvements can (practically) be achieved is, on the other hand, not given attention. There is therefore no link between quality and IE. With regards to research question number one - *To what extent and in what ways has the principles of inclusive education been adopted in the Ghanaian context?* – this research shows that IE principles of access and quality have been adopted to different extents. Access is characterized by a dichotomy between mainstream and inclusive schools, where different categories of children are to be included in either the one or the other. This implies that IE is not for all children, but only for a few - only for those in inclusive schools. Yet, all mainstream schools are to be inclusive schools by 2015. Quality IE, on the other hand, has not been adopted in Ghana.

To investigate school and classroom level of IE in Ghana, this thesis explored practices of IE at two government provided basic schools; one mainstream school and one inclusive school. An exploration of these two schools enabled me to get insights into the practices of IE, and how the two approaches compare. With this, research question number two - *How has inclusive education been implemented and how do different approaches compare?* - is answered. The findings of the two schools show that there are little differences between them. The main differences are that the two schools target educational access to different children. There were no children with (recognized) learning disabilities or difficulties observed in the mainstream school. However, since the school gives classes in the morning, it is argued that the school ensures greater attendance among pupils who are disadvantaged in terms of socio-economic background of the family. Many pupils in the school come from trading families, and are expected to help their families at the markets in the afternoons. The access observed in this school is in line with the ESP 2010-2020.

At the inclusive school, on the other hand, it was observed that access is given to children with (visible) disabilities. This is also in accordance with what the ESP 2010-2020 state about access to inclusive schools. With regards to the principle of quality, both schools show little use of teaching activities and strategies that support quality IE. The mainstream school shows slightly more use of teaching strategies supporting IE than the inclusive school. However, this use was not characterized by structure; they seemed only to appear randomly. Here, one can conclude that both schools' lack of teaching practices that support quality IE is due to the ESP 2010-2020's

silence on it. On the other hand, and highly important, the basic schools syllabuses give clear suggestions as to what practices teachers are expected to use in class. These suggested practices are in line with practices supporting quality IE, such as group work, individual exploration and field trips. However, in the syllabuses they are not linked to IE, rather they are linked to the general achievement of the national objectives and aims of education. Teachers at both schools are to use the syllabuses for lesson planning. However, it was found that this is not the case.

In relation to implementation of IE, this research identified several barriers that apply in the Ghanaian context. These barriers are linked to limited guidelines from government levels, limited teaching and learning resources, inefficient use of teaching time, lack of knowledge on teaching strategies, and aspects related to culture in education. They pose challenges to implementation of IE in Ghana, specifically in quality terms. This leads me to research question number three: *How can quality inclusive education contribute to improved learning in the Ghanaian environment and what are the challenges?* For quality IE to contribute to improved learning in the Ghanaian environment, quality of education has to be improved. It will involve giving meaning to learner-centered pedagogy, retraining teachers to be better prepared for the demands of inclusive pedagogy, providing learning resources and effectively utilizing existing ones, strengthening assessment processes of children with learning difficulties, and providing detailed guidelines to educators at all levels. These challenges need to be met.

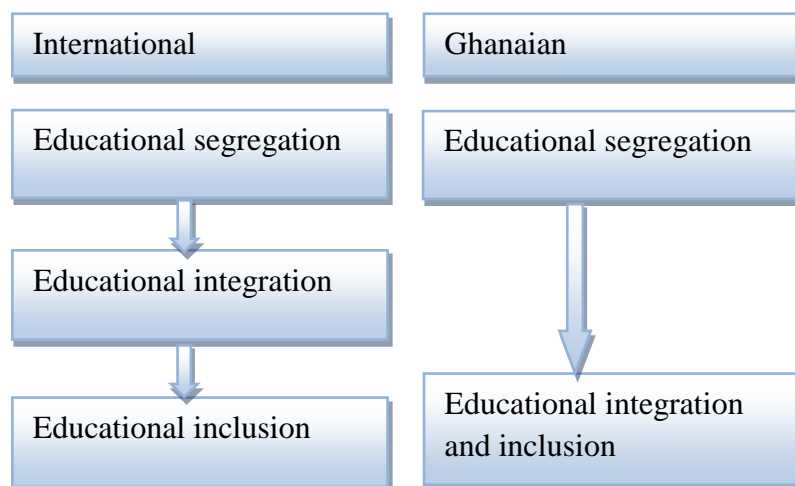
The following sections elaborate on the research findings related to the three research questions.

7.2 The development of inclusive education in Ghana

The international development of IE has gone through three phases; segregation, integration and inclusion. Before the 1980's, the educational opportunities given to children with disabilities and other disadvantages was through segregation. During the 1980's, as a response to growing international obligations on children's rights to education and equal opportunities, the notion of integration was introduced. However, integrations' attempt to provide equal opportunities was often not met due to children's placement in special units within mainstream (regular) institutions. This placement was claimed to be yet another way of segregating disabled and disadvantaged children. During the 1990's, the inclusive approach was therefore introduced through the notion of full inclusion in mainstream (regular) classrooms. Such inclusion implies full physical, mental and social access to and participation in mainstream classrooms at all times,

and is to ensure education for all, equality of opportunities and social justice (Tomlinson 1985, Pijl, Meijer & Hegarty 1997, Vislie 2004, Wade & Moore 1992).

In the Ghanaian context, the development of IE has had influence from the international field, especially from the EFA and Salamanca agendas (Anthony 2011). As mentioned in chapter four, it was first introduced in 2003/2004 under a pilot project. In this project, some selected schools throughout the country were targeted with IE principles (Anthony 2009, Anthony 2011, GES 2004). The targeted schools were labeled ‘the inclusive schools’. They are mainstream schools specifically targeting the inclusive approach, and the label ‘inclusive schools’ distinguishes them from regular mainstream schools. As part of the introduction of educational inclusion, was also the introduction of educational integration. The purpose of this joint introduction was to strengthen the initiative to meet the obligations of IE set by the Salamanca statement. Compared to the international development of IE, the development of IE in Ghana has skipped the phase of integration; the phase of inclusion jumped directly from the phase of segregation. However, with the phase of inclusion, came integration. This is illustrated in model 7.1.



Model 7.1: International and Ghanaian development of IE

Internationally, integration was seen as working against the principles of inclusion. This was also the case at the special unit in Accra. One can argue here that their attempt to meet IE with integration is working against the IE principles of social justice, respect and acceptance of diversity and equal opportunities. However, without integration, in Ghana there would probably be no opportunities for the children who are now given access through the units. Thus, including integration in IE may be a route towards future social justice and equal opportunities for these children in the Ghanaian context. As is further discussed in section 7.4.3, it may additionally lead

to the breaking down of societal stigmas towards these children; it may lead to societal respect and acceptance of diversity.

7.3 Access

As the point has been made throughout this thesis, access is a core principle of IE. This research found that there are no clear directions as to how the principle has been adopted in Ghana. The different participants and national documents give different directions as to which children are accounted for in terms of access. The ESP 2010-2020 states that IE should target children with mental and/or physical impairments, orphans, and fast and slow learners. SED (2011), however, state that schools targeting IE should focus on pupils with disabilities and special educational needs (SEN). The participants from the ministries, colleges and universities, and the two schools, on the other hand, adopt a broader view on which children IE targets. These participants talk of all children; those with disabilities and SEN, those marginalized and disadvantaged for any reason, as well as those without any of these. This broad focus implies that the division between mainstream and inclusive schools may not be necessary. However, they do not make it clear as to what children are included in these broad terms; does it include all children or children with specific disadvantages or special educational needs? The only clearness expressed throughout is that IE focuses on access of disabled children; the visually and hearing impaired and mentally disabled.

Ghana's focus on these categories of children supports Peters' (2004) observation that "most countries of the South have concentrated their IE efforts on moderately and severely disabled children in four categories: physical/mobility impairments, blindness, deafness and cognitive impairments" (Peters 2004:16). In Ghana, this is also the focus given in special schools. These categories seem to have been transferred from the special schools to the inclusive schools – from the phase of educational segregation to educational inclusion. According to the Salamanca statement, the existence of special schools may serve as a valuable starting point for the development of IE (UNESCO & MoES Spain 1994).

Using Tomasevski's 4-A's scheme, I will argue that the ESP 2010-2020 meets the goals of accessibility and availability to a certain extent. Accessibility and availability refer to the obligation to make basic schools compulsory, free of cost, and (physically) available. This further implies that all barriers should be removed and non-discrimination should take place (Tomasevski 2003). The ESP 2010-2020 gives clear statements for basic education to be

compulsory, fee-free, non-discriminatory and (physically) available for all children. These are further in line with the goals of the Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) launched in 1996, as presented in chapter four. These goals are to give the government of Ghana the obligation to make education, among others, free and compulsory (Akyeampong 2009). With IE, attempts are also made to include disabled and disadvantaged children. However, this is currently done to limited amounts; schools are not physically available to all, and only some disadvantaged and disabled children are given access to inclusive schools.

7.3.1 Assessment and placement

Two other categories that seem to be of issue in Ghana in relation to access to IE are the categories of ‘severe’ and ‘non-severe’. In the ESP 2010-2020 and according to participants, children who are severely disabled are expected to access special schools rather than inclusive schools. Whether a child is ‘severe’ or ‘non-severe’ is to be assessed by healthcare professionals at national assessment centers. However, as evidenced from the special unit, not all children are assessed by an assessment center. Thus, there appears not to be well established assessment procedures for children with disabilities or learning difficulties. These issues of access to IE – what categories of disabilities or disadvantages are taken into account, and the categories of ‘severe’ and ‘non-severe’ - may provide difficulties placing children in the appropriate educational institution. Placement may therefore in some cases be based on personal judgment rather than professional assessment, and this may threaten equality of opportunities and social justice.

Concluding remarks

Ghana has divided the international focus on all children into two where some disadvantages are given attention in mainstream education and other disadvantages are given attention in IE. Does this mean that IE, as internationally defined, is divided between mainstream and inclusive schools in Ghana? And if so, what is then the rationale for the distinction? Or does it mean that the categories of children given attention in mainstream education have always been given attention and that IE attempts on giving attention only to those who have traditionally been excluded from attention?

Since IE is introduced as an approach to mainstream schools but given special attention in terms of (access) goals and purpose, IE practices may not be expected to be apparent in mainstream

schools where this approach is not directly targeted. This leads to the exclusion of visibly and recognized disabled children in mainstream schools where the inclusive approach is not targeted.

7.4 Quality

While the point has been made throughout this thesis that access is a core principle of IE, it has also been emphasized that without participation and learning there is little to IE. The goal of IE, in addition to providing educational access to all, is to provide educational quality to all. One aspect of IE (access) has been dealt with; the second (quality) is examined next. In this section I will discuss how the quality aspect of IE is accounted for in the Ghanaian context, both through policy documents, teacher training and school practices.

7.4.1 Classroom practices

The two schools investigated are, through the basic school syllabuses, introduced to specific teaching strategies that should be used for all pupils to acquire desired skills. These are, among others, group work, discussions, field trips and problem-solving (MoESS 2007A, MoESS 2007B, MoESS 2007C). These strategies are supported by constructivist and socio-constructivist theories on teaching and learning, presented through Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner. According to these theorists, classroom instruction needs to adapt to the individual child's life circumstances so that the child is able to learn according to its own experiences, explorations and ZPDs (Kozulin 1998, Kozulin 2003:15-38, Mercer 1994:92-110, von Glaserfeld 1989, Wertsch 1985, Wood, Bruner & Ross 1976). For the quality aspect of IE to be achieved, it is expected of schools to use these methods in classroom teaching.

In the ESP 2010-2020 there is a focus on both mainstream schools and inclusive schools to increase quality of education. As part of this, schools should be facilitated with adequate teaching and learning materials. However, there is only a focus on the provision of these. No focus is given to their use (MoE 2011B). This may together imply that teachers at both schools are expected to use different methods in teaching but that the methods do not need to be adapted to the needs of the pupils; they should practice differentiation but not adaptation. Observations reveal that both schools make limited use of the resources they have: there is limited instructional differentiation and no adaptation (see tables 6.1 and 6.2). This is despite their obligations to use the basic school syllabuses in the planning of their lessons.

This brings me again to Tomasevski's four A's scheme. In this case, with regards to acceptability and adaptability; acceptability has to do with quality in terms of school environment, such as being equipped with well-trained teachers and no use of corporal punishment. Adaptability, on the other hand, has to do with schools' abilities to adapt to children's abilities, needs and interests (Tomasevski 2003). In this regard, it can be argued that there are no specific directions given in the ESP 2010-2020 in terms of schools' acceptability and adaptability. The two schools are additionally not achieving these goals; classroom instruction is not adapted to children's needs and abilities, schools and classrooms are not made accessible to physically handicapped children, and corporal punishment was frequently used.

Due to schools' limited use of differentiation and adaptation, and due to the ESP 2010-2020's lack of attention to (individual adaptation of) teaching strategies, one may expect that the disabled and marginalized children given access to mainstream and inclusive schools are at great risk of developing learning difficulties (Hayford 2007, UNESCO 2010). Hayford (2007) observed that marginalized children or children with invisible disabilities – children who fall under the category of 'normal' – are not likely to be given any special attention in terms of pedagogical interventions. However, this research revealed that children with visible disabilities and learning difficulties are neither given special attention in terms of pedagogical interventions – neither in the ESP 2010-2020 nor in the inclusive school. Disadvantaged children in Ghana are accordingly given the access to either mainstream or inclusive education, but not the opportunity to learn – they are given the right *to* education but not the right *in* education.

Since Kuyini and Desai (2008), little has changed in terms of provision of instruction to children with learning disabilities and difficulties. As with their research, this research shows that the instructional strategies mostly used is knowledge review and individual work on assignments. Given that Ghana aims at full inclusion by 2015, it raises questions about the quality of educational provision in an inclusive setting.

Additional to the use of teaching strategies and activities, the basic school syllabuses make suggestions as to what the role of the teacher should be; the teachers should guide and help pupils in their acquirement of new knowledge and skills. The syllabus for citizenship education, enjoins teachers to facilitate pupils' opportunities for internalization. According to Vygotsky, internalization refers to the making of one's own meaning of new knowledge and skills (Lantolf 2003). This implies for the teacher to guide pupils in the search for their own understanding. These roles are further in coherence with the teacher roles the constructivist and socio-constructivist theories emphasize; the teacher should guide the pupils through their search for

new knowledge and meaning, and not function as knowledge transmitters (Terhart 2003). However, through observation (see tables 6.1 and 6.2) it is evident that teachers help pupils individually only rarely (note: once) in two classes. The observations further reveal that teachers instruct and that pupils are expected to memorize and use definitions given in text books only. This is linked to traditional classroom instruction and contradicts IE classroom instruction. Issues on why the role of the teachers as guides and assistants in pupils search for knowledge and skills are apparent in linguistic terms only are discussed in section 7.4.3.

Considering the notion of educational outcomes (Peters 2004), as discussed in chapter three, one may assume that when classroom instruction is not differentiated and adapted to individual needs and abilities, learning outcomes may not be expected to increase. Tests achievements are not factored into this research. However, with the limited use of differentiation and adaptation at the two schools, it may be inferred that learning outcomes of the pupils are negatively affected.

7.4.2 Policy and school factors impacting quality inclusive education

Several factors are vital for successful implementation of IE (Kuyini & Desai 2007, Mittler 2000, UNESCO 2009, UNESCO & MoES Spain 1994). These factors are, among others, well-established national policies, the allocation of teaching and learning materials, and sufficient teaching time. In this section I will discuss these issues. It is evident so far that policies do not give clear directions for improvement of quality in either mainstream schools or inclusive schools. Without this, practical implementation of quality IE may not be realized. The lack on emphasize on quality is observed at both schools and may be a natural consequence of the lack of attention given to quality in national education policies and guidelines. National policies need to express not just broad visions but specific goals and strategies that are further expressed in the national school syllabuses.

Another issue concerning government level is the basic school syllabuses. It is mentioned that for successful IE a flexible and inclusive curriculum is essential. With inclusive curriculums, the focus lies on the development of the whole child; emotional, cognitive, creative and social (Mittler 2000, UNESCO 2009). As seen in chapter four, the objectives of education in Ghana has throughout the past few decades concerned the development of the child for the purpose of contribution to national economic and social development, and to live meaningful and productive lives. To achieve these objectives, education should focus on the intellectual, physical, spiritual and emotional development of the child (Akyeampong 2010, GES 2004, MoE 2011A, MoE 2011B, UNESCO & IBE 2010/2011). These goals are also evidenced in the basic school

syllabuses; the different subjects should ensure creative, intellectual and emotional development among pupils. However, to achieve these goals, the teaching and learning activities mentioned in the syllabuses are essential. These are activities such as group work, field trips and individual explorations. With no use of these activities, one can argue that these objectives and goals will not be achieved.

Linked to the notion of educational process and input, is the use (process) of allocated (input) resources such as teaching and learning materials and teaching time. There is a national recognition that schools should be equipped with appropriate teaching and learning materials. IE resources available to the schools were inadequate especially at the mainstream school. However, next to the school building was a resource center where teaching and learning materials are made for teachers. The inclusive school was comparatively better resourced. The teachers at both schools seem to be aware about the importance of the use of resources. Yet, they do not use the resources that are there. In addition, time needs to be valued as a resource and utilized effectively. There are differences between the two schools in the teaching hours available to them. The mainstream school has fewer teaching hours per day than the inclusive school. Teachers claim that they were not able to focus on pupils with learning difficulties due to limited teaching time. During my stay of six days only five classes were fully completed in each school. With a stay of six days in each school and an average of four classes each day, there should have been 24 fully completed classes. Linked to this, it can be argued that teaching time (as with teaching and learning materials) is not effectively used.

Another factor that seriously impacts quality is teacher-pupil ratio. The teacher-pupil ratio at the mainstream school was 1:53, and at the inclusive school it was 1:59. Despite teachers claiming that they are not able to pay attention to the slow and fast learners due to large classes, the ESP 2010-2020 state that the teacher-pupil ratio should be increased from the country average of 1:30 to 1:45 in urban areas and 1:15 to 1:30 in rural areas. This is to be done to reduce government costs on education since schools are often overstaffed and this has a great bearing on government finances (MoE 2011A). This contradicts what is vital for classroom implementation of IE; low teacher-pupil ratios (Pijl, Meijer & Hegarty 1997, UNESCO 2009). It seems here that economic issues have greater prioritization than quality of teaching and learning.

Teacher training is also of concern in successful implementation of IE. In Ghana, TTCs focus on different aspects of IE. However, not all teachers in Ghanaian schools have had training from a TTC. For these teachers, in-service training is therefore vital. In Ghana there are several in-service training programs. However, according to participants at Accra TTC and UCC these

programs do not work sufficiently. As part of removing the barrier of uneducated teachers, sufficient in-service training must be targeted.

These aspects provide challenges to classroom implementation of IE. In addition to these, are challenges relating to culture; teachers' perceptions about children, learning, disabilities and learning difficulties.

7.4.3 Cultural factors impacting quality inclusive education

As discussed in chapter six, some factors impact the pedagogical implementation of IE in Ghana. These factors are linked to observations on how teachers talk and respond to their pupils. The observations reveal that pupils' answers are rejected unless they are in accordance with the text books, teachers emphasize that pupils need to listen to what they have to say because pupils do not know the correct way of doing things or the correct answer to things, pupils have to repeat definitions out loud for memorization purposes, and teachers blame pupils when pupils are not able to re-tell what the teachers have talked about in class. These practices are linked to the first and second model of Bruner's *folk pedagogy*; pupils are perceived either as imitators (model one) or as blank slates that teachers or other adults need to fill up (model two) (Bruner 1996). These practices further do not support the teaching strategies and the role of the teachers emphasized through the constructivist and socio-constructivist theories (Larochelle & Bednarz 1998, Terhart 2003, von Glaserfeld 1989, Wood, Bruner & Ross 1976) and the basic school syllabuses (section 7.4.1). In schools where Bruner's first two models are applied – in schools that apply traditional classroom instruction (Heacox 2002) - one may therefore not expect pedagogical interventions supporting IE to be used. This may be an answer to why these teaching and learning activities are represented in Ghana in linguistic terms only.

Another factor associated with culture in education, is the way in which children with disabilities and disadvantages are viewed. These children are traditionally viewed as liabilities and non-contributors by society. They are additionally surrounded by stigma. When linking this to Pijl & Mijer (1997:8-13) and a research conducted by Kuyini & Desai (2007) one can argue that these views towards disabled and disadvantaged children may negatively affect implementation of IE. The ESP 2010-2020 state that, these children shall not be disadvantaged in education and that they, as far as possible, shall be included in mainstream or inclusive education. It further states that all barriers must be removed. However, the child is either to fit in special education, mainstream education or IE. With these aspects, Ghana can be said to have an individual model on disabilities. The only obligation schools are to

meet, according to the ESP 2010-2020, is that of barrier removal. This implies that children are to fit to the school structure and not the school structure to fit the children.

These two cultural factors are, as argued in chapter two, vital for successful implementation of IE. Bruner's first two models and the individual model on disability are not in coherence with the principles of the quality aspect of IE – the inclusive education pedagogy. Consequently, Ghana's approach, it can be inferred, is not in coherence with IE pedagogy.

These cultural factors make important and special challenges for the Ghanaian environment in terms of learning improvement among their pupils. Compared to the factors discussed in section 7.4.2, these cultural factors are not equally visible or equally easy to fix.

Summary

Even though I have argued that the Ghanaian context does not seem to support the principle of quality IE, it is again important to mention that the inclusion of disabled and disadvantaged children in Ghanaian policy documents may lead to actual future inclusion in education. However, for such inclusion to take place it is important that the identified barriers are removed. This includes a change of the culture in education. If these barriers are removed, IE in Ghana may in turn lead to societal inclusion and social justice – two aspects that are highly important for effective adoption of IE, as internationally defined (Thomas & Loxley 2007, UNESCO & MoES Spain 1994).

As far Ghana has come, IE can be argued to be part of combating discrimination and stigmas towards children with disabilities. It is part of increasing the respect and acceptance of difference. However, for IE in Ghana to meet the goals of quality, equal opportunities and social justice, there is a need for pedagogy, teachers' roles, and culture in education to be changed. Inclusive education must not only be made accessible and available, it must also be made acceptable and adaptable.

7.5 Conclusion

In this research I have explored IE in Ghana at three levels; government level, college and university level and basic school level. An essential argument in this thesis is that the IE principle of access is adopted at all levels. However, the Ghanaian adoption of internationally defined access to IE is divided between two types of school approaches; mainstream (regular)

schools and inclusive schools. The principle of quality, on the other hand, is not adopted in Ghana. Quality is of general concern at all levels, but it is not linked to IE practices – it is not linked to differentiation and adaption. With this, Ghana has adopted IE in terms of giving children the rights *to* (access) education, but not the rights *in* (quality) education. Ghana seems to be on changing course with regards to providing access to disabled and disadvantaged children, but they do not seem to be on any course towards quality of education.

This may be caused by, in addition to the lack of and inefficient use of teaching and learning materials and teaching time, the culture in education; that is, teachers' view on children as imitators and blank states rather than as thinkers and knowledgeable, and society's view of disabilities in accordance to the individual model. This may further be the reason to why Ghana has adopted the principle of access to a grater extent than the principle of quality. The principle of quality IE does not seem to fit into the Ghanaian culture of education.

Since the quality aspect is not taken into account, it is expected that children with disabilities or disadvantages in terms, for example, growing up in a family of petty traders, will be at great risk of developing learning difficulties. It is further expected that the lack of attention to IE quality may negatively affect Ghana's ability to reach its national objectives and for individuals to live meaningful and productive lives. With these conclusions, there are many future challenges in the field of IE in Ghana.

7.5.1 Future challenges

This research has pointed out certain aspects of IE in the Ghanaian context. However, it is clear that more research is needed in the areas of educational quality, culture in education, and the link between these two. Further, it is suggested that research concerning the link between IE and societal inclusion, social justice and equal opportunities are conducted. This research has not looked at IE with regards to these. However, they are important aspects for the achievement of human rights in education, and for the overall justification of working towards IE.

With regards to policy, it is highly suggested that clear and specific guidelines on special, mainstream and inclusive education are made. Policy, especially the ESP 2010-2020, is characterized by much confusion and this confusion may be transferred to the practical field. In this regard, it is especially important with guidelines on how quality can be achieved. If so done, practical implementation of IE may be more successful. This leads to a third challenge; IE must

be acted upon in schools and classrooms. This is equally important in terms of access as in terms of quality. However, to date the latter seems to be of greater challenge in Ghana than the former.

The major challenge Ghana faces is, however, that of culture in education. Without a culture in education that supports the use of IE pedagogy, quality of education is highly likely not to be improved. Inputs at both policy and teacher training levels are, in such cases, expected not to be effectively or efficiently acted upon, and children are expected to be less likely to benefit from education.

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